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JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

By ARTHUR CHIEL
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Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada



MANITOBA JEWISH PUBLICATIONS
Winnipeg - 1955

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Lid

DEDICATED TO
MY BELOVED PARENTS
FREDA AND SOLOMON CHIEL

Carpet Chiel

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Foreword

THE CHARMING and delightful essays in this book will induce in all readers a sense of pleasure and in some a feeling of disquiet. The pleasure will derive from the interest of the subject matter and the lucidity with which Rabbi Arthur Chiel has presented it. The disquiet among a few will proceed from the fact that it was left to one who is a relative newcomer to Manitoba to dig into the quarries of our Province's past and there discover these veritable treasures. One may hope that their disquiet will in some cases be tempered by the resolve to follow the splendid example of the author, and to look to the history of the places and people around them as useful material for creative or interpretative writings of their own.

The essays in this work are characterized by great variety. Two factors, however, serve to provide a community of spirit among them. One is that each essay has a Manitoba setting; the other is that each is concerned with some aspect of Jewish life or Jewish activity. Viewed from that standpoint the present work must be regarded as a significant contribution in the fields both of *Canadiana* and of *Judaica*.

I am sure that Rabbi Chiel would be the last to claim too much for these essays. Their value is in their interest, both historical and contemporary, and in the information they provide concerning people, places, and events of yesterday. The essays are not as indeed they were never intended to be, either crucial to an understanding of the contemporary scene or indispensable as a guide to tomorrow. Rabbi Chiel has reserved his pivotal material

FOREWORD

for his forthcoming comprehensive work, "Jews of Manitoba." One can still say, however, with confidence that in these essays all readers will find pleasure, stimulation, and enrichment.

How many people in or out of Manitoba ever knew that in an assault case tried in 1882, in which the complainant was a Jew, Chief Justice Wood delivered a judgment in which, in eloquent and lyrical terms, he extolled the virtues of the Jewish people and vigorously condemned their persecution? Or that in the year 1884 the one hundredth birthday of Sir Moses Montefiore called forth from the two Jewish congregations in Winnipeg expressions of adulation in the form of illuminated addresses, wherein they gave to this great leader the homage of their hearts? Or that in the tragic life of Louis Riel an aspect of Jewish interest emerges, based on the fact that at times Riel insisted that he was really Mordecai a Jew? These and many other matters of like fascination await the reader of this volume.

Rabbi Chiel's industry, research, and talents have produced a work which will entertain, inform and satisfy all who believe, with Napoleon, that "history is the only true philosophy."

JUSTICE SAMUEL FREEDMAN,
Court of Queen's Bench
Winnipeg, Manitoba

November 25, 1955

Preface

CANADIAN JEWISH history has to date been the bailiwick of less than a handful of researchers. The number of works that have appeared thus far number, I believe, four separate volumes, written by Arthur Hart (*The Jew in Canada—1926*), A. Rhinewine (*Looking Back a Century—1932*), B. G. Sack (*History of the Jews in Canada—1945*), David Rome (*Jews of British Columbia—Early Years*). Materials are also to be found in the Proceedings of the American Jewish Historical Society and individual articles have appeared in the Yearbooks of the Canadian Jewish Congress as well as in the various Anglo-Jewish newspapers across Canada. Dr. Jacob Marcus, leading American Jewish historian, incorporated an excellent chapter concerning early Canadian Jewry in his recent work, "Early American Jewry." (Volume I—1951).

A good beginning has been made but a vast amount of work remains yet to be done. Perhaps considerable stimulus will be given to further research by the forthcoming bi-centennial celebration of the Canadian Jewish community in 1960, to which consideration is now being given by a special committee set up by the Canadian Jewish Congress.

To achieve a comprehensive history of Canadian Jewry there is the need to encourage an examination and analysis of the records of Jewish communities throughout Canada. Local studies must be undertaken and from these regional histories there will ultimately emerge a truly definitive over-all work.

PREFACE

With an eye to the possibility of a Manitoba study, I began in 1950 to locate and to delve into local Jewish records, to interview pioneer Jewish residents, and to sample the general press of earlier decades. The initial efforts were stimulating and fruitful leading subsequently to my more intensive and systematic research project under the auspices of the Manitoba Historical Society. The project on behalf of the Society is still under way and will be completed by the end of 1956.

Included in this volume are individual articles, by-products as it were of the larger work, which have appeared in a variety of publications over the past several years, among them the National Jewish Monthly, Chicago Jewish Forum, Menorah Journal, The Zukunft, Toronto Jewish Standard, Jewish Post, Israelite Press, Western Jewish News and the Western Jewish Bulletin.

In collating the articles herein included I am hopeful that a goodly reading audience will be reached and that their appetites will be further whetted for the larger and more comprehensive "Jews of Manitoba." From my personal point of view I have derived from the research efforts and the writing of these essays the satisfaction of fulfilling the admonition of the verse in Deuteronomy:

Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations.

ARTHUR A. CHIEL

Winnipeg, Manitoba.
Heshvan 11, 5716
October 27, 1955.

Acknowledgement

"ALL BEGINNINGS are difficult," runs an old Hebrew saying. And a truism though this adage be, it bears repetition. Yet, even a difficult beginning can be considerably alleviated by the knowledge that there are the stalwarts close at hand who offer encouragement and interest in one's efforts. I am grateful for the fact that it has been thus in my history research effort. If I have succeeded somewhat to date, the achievement is in no small part due to the enthusiasm evinced by people and organizations.

These are they to whom I am particularly indebted: Mr. Harry Silverberg, who has unhesitatingly supported all worthy projects that I have brought to his attention, Mr. Harry Cantor, Mr. Jack Markson, Mr. Sol Kanee, Mr. Hyman Adelman, Mr. Max Nathanson, Mr. Charles O. Swartz, Mr. Joseph Margulius, Mr. Ben Sheps, Mr. Alex Cham, Mr. Leon Cham, Mr. Harry Steinberg, Mr. Morris Grosh, D. Smith & Sons, Mr. Mark Danzker, Mr. Sam Cohen, Mr. Joseph Billinkoff, Mr. Max Shore, Mr. I. J. Glesby, Mr. Nathan Portnoy, Mr. Harry Odwak, Mr. Louis Hatskin, Mr. Joseph Erlichman, Professor Sol Sinclair, to the Hebrew Fraternal Lodge and the Montefiore Club.

For assisting me with sundry materials, I am grateful to the staff of the Manitoba Legislative Library and the Winnipeg Jewish Public Library. I am indebted also to the late Mr. A. Osofsky and Mr. Harry Wilder for their

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

pioneering efforts in local Jewish history, the fruits of which appeared in the Israelite Press.

I acknowledge happily the constructive suggestions of my severest critic—my wife, Kinneret. To all of these herein mentioned, I offer my thanks for their great kindness.

THE AUTHOR

Table of Contents

Foreword	v
Preface	vii
Acknowledgments	ix
I	
Sholom Aleichem's Fetter Nissel	1
II	
Justice to the Jew in Manitoba	13
III	
Montefiore's Birthday in Winnipeg	21
IV	
Disraeli and His Jewishness	28
V	
Louis Riel—Prophet of a New World	37
VI	
The Story of Three Messengers	50
VII	
The Birth of Shaarey Zedek	58
VIII	
Rosh Pina—Early Beginnings	68
IX	
Montefiore's Papers Discovered in Winnipeg	80
X	
American Jewish Life as Seen Through "Hamelitz"	97
Pioneer Members of Shaarey Zedek	122
Pioneer Members of Rosh Pina	123

Appeal for Aid to Erect a Synagogue.

"Father of all in every age,
"In every clime adored,
"By saint, by savage, and by sage,
"Jehovah, Jove or Lord."

The Hebrews of Winnipeg have, by their united efforts purchased a lot on the corner of King and Connon streets and are endeavoring to erect a Synagogue, wherein they can worship in a manner worthy of Him the God of their Fathers. Although somewhat numerous, our people are not overburdened with wealth, and we therefore appeal to a generous and charitable public for assistance to enable us to carry out our undertaking.

Many of us have fled to this glorious and free country from climes where religious and political freedom are utterly unknown, bringing with us only our lives, the lives of some only of those dear to us and our traditions, leaving behind us the countries of our birth, our wealth, and the memories of innumerable and heartless persecutions.

Here we wish to enjoy that freedom dear to every heart, *the right to worship God* according to our ancient laws.

For His own wise purpose He has chosen to scatter His Jewish people over many lands, those whom fate and His kind hands have guided hither, seek to praise and worship Him as taught us by our traditions, handed down from Father to Son, since the time of Moses, and to raise here a Temple somewhat worthy of the great Creator; the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.

Contributions to the Building Fund can be sent to Philip Brown, chairman of the Building Committee, No. 606, Main street, Winnipeg, Manitoba. All contributions will be entered in the Golden Book of Life and thankfully acknowledged.

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WINNIPEG, { Elul, 5649.
 { August, 1889.

AN APPEAL CIRCULAR

Distributed in Winnipeg in 1889 on behalf of Shaarey Zedek. This document was discovered among the Thomas Greenway Papers in Manitoba's Legislative Library.

Illustrations

Appeal for Aid to Erect a Synagogue	Frontispiece
Nissel Rabinowitsch Zimmerman	7
Chief Justice Wood	16
Sir Moses Montefiore	23
Benjamin Disraeli	30
Louis Riel	42
Hayim Isaac Caregal	52
The First Shaarey Zedek	60
The Ark of the Scrolls in the Original Shaarey Zedek Synagogue	64
The First Rosh Pina	72
The Interior of Old Rosh Pina Synagogue	76
Notice to Montefiore upon His Election As Sheriff	82
Letter to Montefiore Concerning His Eastern Mission	87
Hillary's Letter to Montefiore	92

Jewish Experiences
In Early Manitoba

Sholom Aleichem's Fetter Nissel

IN WINNIPEG'S oldest Jewish cemetery stands a tombstone on which is inscribed "Nissel Rabinowitsch—Born 1837, Peraieslav, Russia—Died 1897." There is nothing extraordinary about the appearance of this particular tombstone; it is no larger, no finer and no more conspicuous than any other in the B'nai Israel Cemetery. What sets it apart from the gravestones in this burial field, situated some four wild miles east of Winnipeg is the fact that it marks the grave of Nissel Rabinowitsch, an uncle of the immortal Sholom Aleichem. Of course, the mere fact of his relationship to the genial Yiddish writer does not entitle him to particular attention; nor would he be of interest to us were it not that Sholom Aleichem himself singled out Nissel Rabinowitsch Zimmerman as a significant influence upon the development of his outlook. In his autobiography, "Fun'm Yarid—From the Fair," Sholom Aleichem writes about his Fetter Nissel (Uncle Nissel), "In this man there was lost to the world a poet; he enjoyed singing Yiddish songs, particularly those of his own creation. While he was in prison, he wrote a Yiddish poem about himself in alphabet acrostic form and he composed an original melody for it—a melody which stirred one's soul. How many of such talents have gone lost among us, talents wholly unnoticed."

Fetter Nissel was one of three brothers, the two elder being Nahum, Sholom Aleichem's father, and Pinye. As was characteristic of that period, they were identified by their patronym—Nahum Vevick's, Pinye

Vevick's and Nissel Vevick's. While the two elder brothers were hassidim, Fetter Nissel was already the enlightened gentleman, his earlocks being modest and somewhat concealed behind the ears, his capote with a modern cut and his shoes always well-shined. Further proof of his enlightenment was the fact that he followed the Torah reading on Sabbath in his *chumosh* (Pentateuch) which contained Moses Mendelssohn's "Beur" commentary. In spite of this there was nothing snobbish about Fetter Nissel though his seat was at the choice *miqrach* (eastern) wall. More often than not he would sit among the ordinary folk entertaining them with colorful tales about Montefiore and Rothschild, subsequently Sholom Aleichem's Kasrielevky heroes.

A lively fellow, Fetter Nissel was alert to the opportunities of a jest, particularly eager to entertain the ladies with his humor. Blessed with a resonant voice, Fetter Nissel required little coaxing to sing. As Sholom Aleichem might put it, Fetter Nissel was, in brief, a huliak! "Without him a wedding was like a funeral," writes Sholom Aleichem, "no wedding at all. Nissel Vevick's, or Nissel Rabinowitsch would revive the dead, could make the world to talk, to laugh and to dance. The difference between him and Fetter Pinye was that Fetter Pinye *could* dance while Fetter Nissel could rouse others to dance. Each and all would drink with him at a festive occasion—they sang with him, they danced with him. Foremost among his companion roysterers was the local police chief. They were so chummy that in fun Fetter Nissel would exchange hats with him—and it was good for the Jews, *siz gevesen la-yehudim!* Little wonder then that to the Voronkovites, later Sholom Aleichem's Kasrielevkites, Fetter Nissel was the leading

citizen. Not only did Jews respect him but also among the gentiles was he held in high esteem. It was not unusual for the police chief to say, "Let's visit Nissel for a good story, and a glass of whiskey."

But alas, while the Lord did say to Mother Eve concerning Adam, "And he shall rule over thee," Fetter Nissel's wife Hodel had either been unfamiliar with this Biblical admonition or she had chosen to ignore it. For though Fetter Nissel was a respected figure abroad, he commanded little regard from his wife, the Mume Hodel. Nondescript, a small, swarthy and unimpressive female, Mume Hodel was a veritable virago insofar as poor Fetter Nissel was concerned. Dignified Fetter Nissel, man-about-town, political figure, popular cavalier, a favorite with the ladies, would often be assaulted with a wet broom or a pillow aimed at him by the tempestuous Hodel. How Fetter Nissel feared her, how he trembled before his Hodel. But then as Sholom Aleichem writes, "All great men are as naught before their wives."

And yet, when Simchas Torah came, Fetter Nissel forgot his domestic relations, and invited all of Voronkova to his home. Braving Hodel's retribution he opened the whiskey bottles, unbunged the beer barrel, unsealed the pickle-jug, pulled out the meat-laden pots and pans from the lime-oven, in general pogromized the closets and — *le-chayim!* And Mume Hodel? *Meyla*, it was worth it for after all, what is Simchas Torah without a *bulianke*?

You would naturally imagine that Fetter Nissel disliked his wife, Hodel. Yet, paradoxical as it may sound, he thought the world of her, considered her a prudent woman, respected her judgment greatly. "He considered her very clever," writes Sholom Aleichem's brother in

his memoirs. "She suffered only from the fact that she came from Korsun in Kiev Gubernia, and the Korsunites are reputed to be high-strung and for this high-stringedness there is but one remedy—pearls. God willing, thought Nissel, he would buy her pearls and her personality would immediately change." Nahum, Sholom Aleichem's father, was skeptical about the "pearl treatment"—he proposed a less costly and more reliable form of therapy, a good drubbing. When Hodel subsequently learned of Nahum's suggested treatment, Fetter Nissel was the more harassed by Hodel and was henceforth never permitted to forget that he came of a wife-beating clan. The Rabinowitsches reached their nadir in Mume Hodel's esteem.

The quest for a better livelihood sent Sholom Aleichem's family forth from Voronkova to Peraieslav when Sholom Aleichem was eleven years old. Until his parents were fully settled in their new home, Sholom Aleichem and his brothers remained for a few treasured weeks in the town of their happy childhood with their beloved Fetter Nissel. This pleasant interlude was broken when a letter from their father summoned the children to Peraieslav. It was a painful parting for Sholom Aleichem from a favorite uncle and never-to-be-forgotten environs—the inspiration for Kasrielevky.

Although Sholom Aleichem was never to see Voronkova again, his Voronkovite uncle came frequently to Peraieslav bringing with him his contagious conviviality. Especially at the festivals was his presence most welcome. With him about there were gifts, and pranks, and laughing and singing—the very rafters re-echoed his hearty, good humor. To catch a glimpse of Fetter Nissel

in Nahum's house one need only to read Sholom Aleichem's "Chanuka Geld—Chanukah Money."

At the familial holiday celebrations Fetter Nissel dominated the scene. Particularly was this true at the Chanukah gathering. Fetter Nissel would marshal the family about the table, seating Sholom Aleichem closest to him, for he sensed a kinship of spirit with him. When the latkes were brought in, Fetter Nissel announced pontifically, "Rabosay, rabosay, here are your *latkes*, aplenty and fat, eat with gusto your Chanukah fare!" And the Rabinowitsches, one and all were off to a hearty gallop. After the *latkes* came the entertainment with Fetter Nissel leading and Sholom Aleichem following at close pace. Young Sholom Aleichem was particularly adept at catching the ditties and melodies concocted by his uncle and the two together would burst with *joie de juif*. Of all the clan only the puritanical Fetter Pinye was restrained, insisting that the singing be limited to Chanukah songs but he was overridden by the merry company. Even Mume Hodel forgot her dislike of the Rabinowitsches and joined in the merriment.

* * *

How did Sholom Aleichem's Fetter Nissel get to the prairie wilds of Winnipeg in 1882 and how did he come to find his eternal rest in the old B'nai Israel Cemetery of Transcona outside Winnipeg so far from Voronkova near Peraieslav? Thereby hangs a tale, partial details of which are to be found in Sholom Aleichem's "Fun'm Yarid."

As you know by now, Fetter Nissel was the Voronkova *shtadlan*, thanks to his close friendship with the local *pristav*, a relationship warmly enhanced by Fetter Nis-

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

sel's appreciation of the official's bibulousness and corruptibility. When therefore a serious problem arose involving the fate of a fellow Jew in the neighboring town of Berezan it was right that Fetter Nissel be petitioned to intervene on the unfortunate's behalf. Good soul that he was, he turned to his friend, the keeper of the law, but alas with little success, for the *pristav* asserted that Berezan was out of his legal bailiwick. Fetter Nissel, not easily deterred (was it not he who often said, "I am a tough *nissel* to crack"?) fell upon an outrageously daring plan. He, Nissel Rabinowitsch, would disguise himself as a *spravnik* and descend upon Berezan where he would revoke the decree by which his co-religionist was to be evicted from the town. Said and done. Disguised in the uniform of a Russian official, Fetter Nissel came to Berezan, sought out the local police-head and his cohorts and explosively demanded an explanation of the ukase against the Jew. Where was the document? He demanded to see it and it was given to him. At which point he took the official paper, tore it to bits, and tossed them into the faces of the bewildered company. "And," warned Nissel, alias *spravnik*, "if you dare to take up this matter with the governor, be it known that the governor's uncle on his mother's side and my wife are related to a common relative." Berezan officialdom was struck dumb and the pseudo-*spravnik* made his dramatic exit.

And here came Fetter Nissel's downfall, for he failed to take into consideration that just as there are the devotees of a man, there are also his enemies — informers. Who informed? To this day no one knows. But "as oil rises to the water's surface" so did this story come to official attention and Fetter Nissel became



NISSEL RABINOWITSCH ZIMMERMAN
Sholom Aleichem's Winnipeg uncle.

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

the Voronkova Dreyfus in a manner of speaking. Evidence clearly against him, Nissel Rabinowitsch, Voronkova hero of yesterday, was sentenced to jail.

Fetter Nissel should have been chastened by this sad experience but a *nechtiger tog*. For Fetter Nissel bars did not a prison make and when the month of Elul arrived he began to negotiate permission from the Peraieslav prison authorities to allow a *minyan* of Jews in his cell for Rosh Hashona prayers. Once again Fetter Nissel was master of the situation; his request was granted and on Rosh Hashona morning, 1881, Nahum Rabinowitsch and other male relatives came to the prison. "We were frightened by the ominous structure," writes Sholom Aleichem's brother. "The walls were high, the chimney billowed heavy, black smoke. The guards, a gruff lot, hurried us along to the cell. There in the cubicle stood our Fetter Nissel, dressed in prisoner's garb. I must confess that as we approached his cell I had a vision of an emaciated and unhappy man, but I was utterly wrong. Fetter Nissel received us as he would visitors to his own home, embracing each of us, extending an enthusiastic 'Sholom Aleichem!' He joshed, he rhymed about 'guest' and 'arrest,' he inquired after family affairs and sundry matters. We forgot the setting—Fetter Nissel had set us at our ease." Nahum led the *shachris* prayers and Fetter Pinye devoutly chanted the *musaf* prayers while Fetter Nissel, with his orotund voice served as *aide-de-cant* to both. The group prayed with one dominant theme in mind, Fetter Nissel's freedom. Sensing this concern about him, Nissel reassured the *minyan* before they left him that he would be free before long. "I am not an easy nut to crack. I have *bitocheh* even here in prison that I'll be out soon to spin

the world again. After all the wheel must turn." And so it did.

Released from prison some months later, Nissel Rabinowitsch determined to leave Russia, destination momentarily unknown. This was the year 1882, pogroms had set thousands of Jews on the move. The first refuge at hand for many was Brody, Galicia, where the Mansion House Committee consisting of English Jews and non-Jews had set up a receiving center for pogrom victims. Their plan called for the re-settlement of these Jews in the United States and Canada. Assuming the name of Zimmerman to avoid conflict with the Russian authorities, Fetter Nissel and his family crossed the border and arrived in Brody, where he merged his fate with that of the refugees already gathered there. He was assigned to Canada, one of a group of three hundred, and after six weeks of travel by boat and by rail, Nissel Rabinowitsch Zimmerman arrived in Winnipeg to begin life anew on the Canadian prairie.

In "Fun'm Yarid" Sholom Aleichem writes that Fetter Nissel wrote to the Rabinowitch family back home that life was difficult in the new land, nor did he exaggerate. A fellow immigrant of Fetter Nissel had this to say in a letter which he wrote to the Russian Hebrew publication "Hamelitz": "Ill-fated we were from the very first night we arrived here. All day long we did neither eat nor drink, simply because we had not a cent to buy anything with. Hungry and thirsty we lay on the floor of our shelter, and the progeny of Pharaoh's third plague preyed upon us. Thus we were tormented all night, and with the rise of dawn we hurried to work in order to earn the means wherewith to buy bread for our families. We wanted to come here in order to earn

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

an honest livelihood in a land where we would not be exposed to the mockery and ridicule of our gentile neighbors because of our faith and looks. Instead, we were exiled to a desert. Even such work as chopping wood, hewing stone or digging soil is not to be found and the cost of living is extremely high. It is natural under such circumstances that we cannot think of anything of a higher order, such as the reading of a newspaper or a book, as we were accustomed to do at home. Nor have we enough time to recite our daily prayers. We come home at night wearied and exhausted and sleep overcomes us before we have even eaten. We shall perish here and not have so much as a Jewish burial. The child of an immigrant died here today and there is no burial ground for it. We have but one thing left to do—to pour out our hearts before you, dear editor, in the hope that our brethren in other lands may hear our cry of distress and come to our rescue, for out of our earnings we shall not have even in two years, enough for our return fare.” Another of the disillusioned group wrote a letter of complaint to Queen Victoria about the sad fate befallen her new subjects.

But in spite of the severe climate and uncivilized circumstances, Fetter Nissel and his compatriots gradually made their way in the new world. Working at first as common laborers on the railroad, laying tracks for the Canadian Pacific which was then extending its line to the west coast of Canada, they eked out a livelihood. Earning one dollar a day, they would pay two dollars to gentile workers who would take their places at work on Sabbath. Those who could not make such an arrangement would sneak off at prayer-time, to “separate the Sabbath from the week.” Among these also was Fetter

SHOLOM ALEICHEM'S FETTER NISSEL

Nissel. After accumulating some of their railroad earnings, Winnipeg Jews set out as peddlers into the rough hinterland, selling to the farmers and the half-breeds.

Eventually, Fetter Nissel opened a general store, succeeding modestly as a merchant. In better financial circumstances, Fetter Nissel was able to send a "pictche" of himself to the Rabinowitsches in Peraieslav with the following inscription:

"Oib ihr vilt wissen
Vos mit mir is geschen
Zint ich hob geton freiheit genissen
Kont ihr mein pictche sehen.

Fun ihr nemt op bilder yeder besinder
S'felt daruf abissel gelt
Ober fun mein biographie vellen wissen eire kinder
As s'iz do a Gott un er fihrt die velt."

Very old-timers, of whom a few remain in Winnipeg today, say that Fetter Nissel often spoke, and with great pride, of his favorite nephew, Sholom Aleichem, who was then making his mark as a literary figure in the Jewish world. On Sabbath afternoon, Nissel would read the latest Sholom Aleichem creations to an audience of young and old. "I remember well the readings of Fetter Nissel," reports a native Winnipegger who was born in 1883. "He read with great warmth and sincerity. You could see that he had lived through the very experiences retold by Sholom Aleichem."

Fetter Nissel was a respected figure in the early Jewish community of Winnipeg. He was among the several pioneers whose names are signed to a dramatically worded appeal issued in Kislev, 1889, which called

for the establishment of a synagogue. In part, the document reads: "Many of us have fled to this glorious country from climes where religious and political freedom are utterly unknown, bringing with us only our lives and our traditions, handed down from father to son, since the time of Moses, and to raise here a Temple somewhat worthy of the great Creator; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." And the synagogue came into being in 1890 with Fetter Nissel again playing a leading role in Jewish communal life. Eventually, dissatisfied with the somewhat "modernistic" character of the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, Nissel helped to establish another, the Rosh Pina in 1892. But as Fetter Nissel grew older he became more and more nostalgic for the hassidic forms of old Voronkova and so he created a small *shul*. Here Fetter Nissel was master, sponsoring old-time Simchas Torah celebrations, Chanukah gatherings a la Peraieslav, and once again "it was good for the Jews."

Sholom Aleichem would have been pleased to know about Fetter Nissel's last synagogue for it came to be known as *die milchige shul* (the dairy synagogue) because its membership were the poor folk as differentiated from the earlier synagogues which had the wealthier congregations, presumably "*die fleysbige*" (the meaty ones). Beautiful coincidence it was that kindred spirits as were Sholom Aleichem and his Fetter, that "*milchig*" was such a meaningful appellation to them—Sholom Aleichem with his Tevye and Fetter Nissel with his *shul*.

Justice to the Jew in Manitoba

IN JUNE OF 1882 over three hundred Russian Jewish immigrants who had fled Czarist pogroms, arrived in Winnipeg. Temporary employment was found for the newcomers by the leaders of the Jewish community who had settled in Winnipeg some years before.

About one hundred and fifty of the immigrants were assigned to work with the Canadian Pacific Railway which was in 1882 laying its tracks through the central and western regions of Canada. The Jewish laborers joined labor gangs working their way as far west as Medicine Hat, a stretch of some six hundred miles extending from Winnipeg.

They lived in their own railway cars, sleeping in the upper section and eating in the dining room below. Working under the supervision of a Jewish foreman who spoke English and Yiddish, the group was also provided with kosher food and was allowed to hold its own worship services. From funds raised among themselves they were able to purchase a Torah, carrying the Holy Scroll with them into the wilderness where they worshipped faithfully together on Sabbaths and holidays.

Life on the prairie was by no means idyllic for the Jewish laborers but it appeared to be an improvement over life in Czarist Russia—until! Until non-Jewish laborers here and there along the railway line began to attack their Jewish co-workers.

Was there to be a repetition of the Russian pogroms here in Canada? The Jewish laborers were tense, suffer-

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

ing in silence and fearful of the future. Once in a while, goaded into uncontrollable anger by the pummelings and verbal insults, a Jew would here and there strike back against an attacker.

One day in late July of 1882 at Rosser Station in Manitoba on the C.P.R. line, Kieva Barsky, one of the Russian Jewish workers, was suddenly attacked for no good reason whatsoever by one, Charles Wicks, who struck Barsky several severe blows with an iron bar. Fortunately, Barsky was able to fend off the attacker by his own efforts together with the assistance of fellow Jews.

Kieva Barsky suffered serious wounds, escaping death by but a hair's breadth. Should he allow the matter to be forgotten or should he press charges against the irresponsible Wicks?

Barsky debated the question with himself and his compatriots carefully. In Russia, whence he had come, it was useless to bring charges against a Gentile. The decision of the Russian court was a foregone conclusion. More often than not a Jewish complainant found that his charges boomeranged and he was a victim twice over.

What of justice here in Canada? Some weeks before the Barsky-Wicks incident an entire group of Jewish lumber workers elsewhere in Manitoba, near White-mouth, had been set upon and were badly mauled, but fearful that they might not receive justice in court they allowed the matter to go by.

Barsky, aware of the earlier occurrence, was confronted by a dilemma. After considerable deliberation he determined to put Manitoba justice to the test. He

JUSTICE TO THE JEWS IN MANITOBA

travelled to Winnipeg and brought back to Rosser Station a provincial police officer who arrested Charles Wicks. The prisoner was brought back to Winnipeg where he was held until the trial.

On August 10, 1882, the case of Queen vs. Charles Wicks was heard in court before Chief Justice Edmund Burke Wood. The case had attracted considerable attention in Winnipeg through the newspaper stories and the courtroom was filled to capacity during the proceedings. Non-Jewish onlookers found the hearing quite colorful. There was need for an interpreter since the Jewish participants were only recent-arrivals and had no familiarity with English. Another unusual feature of the trial was the manner of administering the oath to Jewish witnesses. On stepping into the box each of the Jewish witnesses put on his hat and was sworn in over a Hebrew Bible.

As the trial proceeded, the prosecution put forth evidence attempting to show that Wicks had deliberately and wantonly struck Barsky with the bar of iron while the defence tried to prove that Wicks had used only his fist against Barsky. And the case rested. His Honor, Chief Justice Wood, in summing up said that while he had no doubt whatsoever in his own mind that the intent of the accused was as charged in the indictment, yet owing to the somewhat contradictory nature of the evidence he would give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt, and convict him of common assault, and sentenced him to one month's imprisonment.

In delivering judgment Chief Justice Wood expressed strongest sympathy for the Jews against whom



CHIEF JUSTICE EDMUND BURKE WOOD

JUSTICE TO THE JEWS IN MANITOBA

the attempt was being made by men of Wicks' ilk to inaugurate a persecution of the Russian type. This was wholly out of keeping with Canadian justice and surely not in keeping with the asylum that should be offered to persecuted Jewry.

The Chief Justice then expatiated at length upon the historical role of the Jewish people. The following stenographic excerpts from the judge's discourse are taken from the Winnipeg *Free Press* of August 11, 1882:

The complainant is of the race of the Jews. The senseless and unmeaning persecution of that people by Christian communities—the once chosen people of God—driven from the home of their fathers by fire and sword into every land under heaven, now for upwards of 1800 years, appeals strongly to our sympathy, and makes us blush for our common Christianity.

This man, with others, by Russian Christianity, has been lately driven to our borders as an asylum from persecution, and he is entitled to the welcome of a brother man, and to the protection of the laws aside from all other considerations; but in the case of the Hebrews, wherever they appear, they excite the warmest sympathy.

This singular people which has exercised a more permanent and extensive influence by its religion and literature, than polished Greece or triumphant Rome; which carries us back to the founder of its nationality, Abraham, born at Ur in the land of Chaldea 2,000 years before Christ, descended from Shem, Noah's eldest son, and far back of that period to the dawn of creation—to the renewed covenant of God with man, to angels' visits, to the birth of Isaac, to the wonderful scene of Mount Moriah, to Bethel and its ladder balanced on the skies, and angels descending and ascending, to Jacob and the touching history of his family, to their sojourn in Egypt, to Moses and the burning bush of Mount Horeb, to the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt amid awful miracles, the passage of the Red Sea, their wanderings in the wilderness for forty years, the giving of the law at Mount Sinai amid thunderings and lightnings in the plains of Moab, the crossing of Jordan and final entry into the promised land, to Jerusalem and the ark of the covenant, to the Babylonish captivity and restoration.

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

These are but a few of the many points—constellations—in *via lactia lucida* of the heaven of the history of this people.

For upwards of eighteen centuries her Jerusalem, her Salem and her cities have been destroyed with fire and sword, her inhabitants were all butchered except a few that escaped; and her holy of holies has been desecrated by the temple of the false prophet, her streets have been tramped by the selfish mindedness, enervated and dissolute Ottoman, her cities have been smouldering in dilapidated ruins, her holy places have been polluted with the breath of the infidel—still

"Eternal summer gilds them yet

But all, except their sun is set!"

And this scattered people in their desperation, consisting of but a few thousands, has in its spirit, in its laws, in its language, religion and doctrine, and in its traditions and national character, survived the last wrecks of its palaces and cities, and the annihilation of its political existence as a state.

The Jews present, now, to the world the wonderful spectacle of a race preserving its peculiarities of religion, of worship, of doctrine, of language and feelings, through the long period of 1,800 years of dispersion over the whole globe since the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus, fresh in eternal youth, exempt from mutability and decay. The contemplation of this phenomenon suggests the interposition of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

As I have already said, the history of this people reaches far back of any other records of the human race into the majestic repose of antiquity, "into the night of treacherous story," the voice of whose histories, prophecies, and songs, break upon the ear as billows of the ocean on the surfbeaten rock, as the choir of the roar of the congregated thought of ages.

The annals of its historians, the prophecies of its prophets, the poems of its poets, apostles as well of literature as religion, and the imagery and forms of expression employed have ever been, and will ever be, unquestioned models and canons of criticism.

They present the naked facts of history and reveal the real motives and true nature of man. They portray and lay bare the human breast in all situations and on their system of religion and morals has been engrafted and established Christianity, and the monotheism of the world with all its humanizing influences.

JUSTICE TO THE JEWS IN MANITOBA

Her children are found in every clime under the whole heaven, still adhering to the laws, doctrine and traditions of their fathers with the tenacity of death. Dispersed, despised, trodden under foot, yet they cling to their faith with a devotion that knows no severance.

Numerically now above six millions; yet ostentatiously insignificant, they are at this moment wielding the financial and political power in the courts and cabinets in every kingdom in Europe. Although the soul of songs in every grand opera of the world, in language they say:

"We sat down and wept by the waters
Of Babel and thought of the day
When our foe in the hue of slaughters
Made Salem's high places his prey,
And ye, oh, her desolate daughters,
Were scattered all weeping away.

"While sadly we gazed on the river
Which rolled on in freedom below,
They demanded the song; but oh never
That triumph the stranger shall know!
May this right hand be withered forever
Ere it string our high harp for the foe!

"On the willow that harp is suspended;
On Salem! its sound should be free;
And the hour when their glories were ended,
But left us that token of thee;
And ne'er shall its soft notes be blended
With the voice of the spoiler by me!"

For the last half century her distinguished sons have taken the lead in every walk of learning—in intellectual and moral philosophy, in astronomy, in history, in belles lettres and fine arts, in philology and criticism—ever keeping foremost in their researches, the annals, and literature and language of their race.

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

It was established once and for all that Charles Wicks and his nasty ilk could no longer get away with attacks upon Jews, or for that matter, any other nationality. Chief Justice Wood had set the record straight that justice would be done to all comers, regardless of origin. Kieva Barsky, too, had done his fellow Jews a service by demanding that justice be done.

III

Montefiore's Birthday in Winnipeg

IN OCTOBER of 1884 the world took note of the centenary of a dedicated Jew, loyal Englishman, genuine humanitarian—the legendary Sir Moses Montefiore. Monarchs, statesmen, religious leaders of various faiths paid generous tribute to this great English Jew who had achieved international renown, in particular, through the championing of his people's cause. Whenever and wherever during his lengthy career of service his people's weal was endangered, Sir Moses came at his own expense and frequently under great hardship to plead and intercede on their behalf. Seven times he pilgrimaged to Palestine where he bounteously endowed hospitals and homes for the poor, set under way agricultural enterprises, and built synagogues and tombs over historic sites. When Jews of Damascus suffered a blood libel in 1840, Sir Moses travelled to Egypt, a Turkish protectorate then, and obtained the release of the unjustly accused Jews as well as a firman from the Sultan of Turkey which denounced the baseless charge of ritual murder as a foul calumny against Montefiore's brethren. On two separate occasions he visited Czarist Russia (1846 and 1872) hoping to ameliorate the suffering of the Jews in that benighted empire. He was able to secure lip-service from two czars, each promising a friendlier attitude to the millions of Jews under their rule. In 1858 he journeyed to Rome and attempted unsuccessfully to secure the return of Edgar Mortara, the Jewish boy, who had been stolen from his parents and had been converted to Catholicism by a devout

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

maid-servant of the Mortara family. When Jewry of Rumania cried for assistance to the world, Montefiore came to that barbarous land and risked his life and limb as he attempted to placate howling anti-Semitic mobs.

Nor was Sir Moses' decency limited to his own people. As Sheriff of London, he administered the prisons of his bailiwick in humane fashion and even went so far as to advocate the abolition of capital punishment. When the Chirstians of Syria suffered miserably under Moslem persecution in 1860, Montefiore was moved to write a denunciatory letter accompanied by a munificent contribution of £200, which he personally delivered to the *London Times* one evening after midnight—at age 76! He collected some £20,000 on behalf of Syrian Christians.

Little wonder then that when Moses Montefiore reached the age of one hundred the world paid its tribute along with Jewish communities throughout the globe—including the comparatively small and young Jewish community of Winnipeg. There were two congregations in Winnipeg in October of 1884, Congregation Bethel and Congregation Sons of Israel, both of whom enthusiastically joined Jewry in other parts of the world in paying their honor to the 'Jewish Prince.'

Montefiore's birthday was celebrated in gala fashion by both Hebrew congregations, according to the Winnipeg newspapers. On Sunday, October 26 (Montefiore was born October 24, 1784) the Jews of Winnipeg first foregathered in their respective houses of worship, Congregation Bethel in the Harris Block on Princess Street, and the Sons of Israel in a structure located at Main and Common Streets. Bethel membership consisted of



M. Montefiore

SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE
At the age of one hundred.

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

the earliest settlers, German Jews, while the Sons of Israel were Russian immigrants of 1882. Each congregation prepared its own illuminated address to be sent to the venerable English Jew. Both expressed the heartfelt adulation of Winnipeg Jewry. The testimonials of each congregation follow:

BETHEL ADDRESS TO MONTEFIORE

To Sir Moses Montefiore, Baronet,
Venerable and most respected Sir:

We, the officers of and members of the Congregation Bethel of the Hebrew Nation, presently in the city of Winnipeg, the capitol of the great Northwest of the Dominion of Canada, desire to approach your Excellency with our sincere and heartfelt congratulations on the celebration of your centennial birthday.

When, forty years ago, you were appointed by England's beloved Queen a special envoy to Damascus to secure the release from cruel imprisonment and barbarous treatment of members of the Hebrew nation, you freely gave your time, wealth and health for the amelioration of the conditions of your coreligionists; and when in after years, in Russia, Turkey and other countries, the voice of suffering Hebrews reached your ears, and it was owing to your efforts and good offices that the chains fell from the limbs of the slave, the lash was suspended, which otherwise would have fallen on the shrinking victim of tyranny; and peace and happiness was restored to many a hearth—until then distracted by persecution. Your name, respected sir, is now, and will be for generations to come, a household word amongst us, and not only amongst us, members of that persuasion, made illustrious by your example, but also amongst the nations who have been benefitted by your liberality and universal charity, where your works of practical humanity have been bestowed upon all alike, without distinction of creed or country—in fact throughout the civilized world, where you are looked upon as the noblest philanthropist of this or any age.

The great Creator, for his own wise purposes, has caused the Hebrew nation to wander over many strange lands, but although severed by distance we are, and always will be united by the traditions of our forefathers, and your illustrious name

MONTEFIORE'S BIRTHDAY IN WINNIPEG

and example has been, and will ever be, a further bond to bind the scattered sheaves together until it pleases Him to collect into His granary the harvest of the faithful.

Your illustrious example has thrown over our whole race a halo of respect which smooths our paths through the troubles and vexations of life. The term Hebrew or Jew no longer conveys reproach. On the contrary owing to the love and respect in which your name is held throughout the earth, and that of others of our nationality who rank first amongst the leading spirits of Europe, to be a Hebrew, is to be respected by all those whose respect is valued.

Owing to your vast philanthropy, our people in the Holy Land have at last a resting place where our forefathers dwelt, and our prayers are directed to the everlasting throne in the hope and trust that others of our race, encouraged and stimulated by your brilliant example, may aid in the good work of gathering together the wandering tribes of Israel upon the sunny soil of Israel, and on the banks of our beloved river Jordan.

We thank our Heavenly Father for having so long spared and prospered your life, and we offer up to His Throne our earnest prayers that He, the God of Israel, may in His great wisdom, see fit to prolong the life which has been, so far, so well spent in His service, until your years equal those of your great prototype, Moses, the son of Amram, who lived 120 years. And we assure Your Excellency that our respect and gratitude to yourself is co-equal to that we entertain for the memory of our great law-giver chosen by Him to guide and govern His people.

Under the fostering law of English laws, where all are equal, and secure from the persecutions which our race for centuries in the past have endured, we have, in this far Northwest, found homes for ourselves and our families, where in peace, security and good will towards all men we enabled, in dire and ancient form to worship the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, and to wait the promised time when He in His wisdom may see fit to cause the rebuilding of the temple and the re-establishment of His chosen people.

Dated at Winnipeg, in the Province of Manitoba, Canada, this Yom Aleph De-Rosh Chodesh Marcheshvan Sh'nas Chameishes Alopheim Shesh Meot Arboim Ve-chamisha Labrias Olam (First Day of the Month Heshvan in the year 5,645 A.M.).

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

SONS OF ISRAEL ADDRESS TO MONTEFIORE

To Sir Moses Montefiore, London, England.

Venerable Sir:

We, the Hebrew population of the Province of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories of the Dominion of Canada, mindful of the many and manifold works of practical humanity performed by you throughout Europe, Asia and Africa, and more particularly the kindly heart and helping hand ever extended by you to those brethren suffering from oppression, persecution, disease or famine, cannot let this anniversary of your natal day pass without expressing to you our warmest and heartfelt congratulations.

Although far separated from you, sir, and humbly endeavouring in a new country to better our position in life, yet, we can assure you that your name is most familiar in all our households, and your noble and manly character is ever held up by us as an example to those whom God, in His infinite goodness, has entrusted to our care.

Your one hundredth birthday, respected sir, will be signalized by all of us in our different Synagogues and homes by prayers and hymns of praise to the Father of all, who, in His inscrutable wisdom, has not only spared you to such an honoured age, but has also, through you, testified His tender sympathy of the oppressed and suffering.

We pray Almighty God to spare you to us, and that you may live at least to the good old age of Moses of old, and enjoy, while here, that perfect rest and peace known only to His children—the true and the good.

We remain, sir, in grateful remembrance,

Yours very truly,

LOUIS WERTHEIM, Chairman,
A. MAX, N. TAPPER, B. JACOBS,
S. RIPSTEIN, B. ROSENTHAL,
A. SHRAGGE and L. VINEBERG,
Committee.

On behalf of the Hebrews inhabiting Manitoba and the Northwest Territories of Canada.

Winnipeg, October 24, 1884.

MONTEFIORE'S BIRTHDAY IN WINNIPEG

After each of the Winnipeg congregations conducted separate prayer services at their respective synagogues, the Sons of Israel who had heard tributes already by Rabbi Friedman and Louis Wertheim, formed a procession. Headed by Nissel Zimmerman who carried a large picture of Sir Moses, and Messrs. Shragge, Slerganberg, Cohon and D. Ripstein, each carrying a flag, the procession marched to Bethel Synagogue on King Street where they were welcomed by Mr. George Frankfurter, president of Bethel. At the joint assembly further tributes were paid to Montefiore by Philip Brown and Louis Wertheim. That historic Sunday evening, October 27, 1884, members of both Winnipeg congregations buried their theological differences and danced in unity at Albert Hall in honor of the great English Jew, Sir Moses Montefiore. Seven months later, in June, 1885, Mr. Philip Brown, president of Bethel Hebrew Congregation, received from the ancient philanthropist a letter of acknowledgment for the illuminated addresses and in appreciation of Winnipeg Jewry's thoughtfulness he enclosed a token gift of £5 in aid of the Sabbath School Fund. The letter which bore Montefiore's signature was framed and hung in Bethel Synagogue.

IV

Disraeli and His Jewishness

ALREADY during his colorful lifetime, Benjamin Disraeli, English prime minister and British empire builder, became a legendary figure. A variously talented individual, Disraeli was at one and the same time a politician par excellence in the arena of politics, and a romanticist of dramatic proportions both in his writings and personal aspirations. Born a Jew and initiated into the Jewish community of London on his eighth day, Disraeli was converted to Christianity by his father Isaac at the age of thirteen. Grown to manhood and maturity his all-engrossing interest became English politics, practical politics, which involved the usual behind-the-scenes machinations and intrigue, clever debating on the floor of the House of Commons, and the complex manoeuvring for power and more power until he achieved the prime ministerial position under Queen Victoria.¹

On both his father's and mother's sides Benjamin Disraeli was descended from Sephardic Jewish ancestors. Nor did Disraeli ever attempt to deny his Jewish origin. Quite to the contrary, he wove for himself an aristocratic Jewish family geneology whereby he traced the Disraeli family origins back to Venice and even further back to Spain. It was his romantic tendency which prompted him to establish his origin within an historic setting.

Actually Benjamin Disraeli's grandfather and namesake had migrated to England from Cento in Italy in

DISRAELI AND HIS JEWISHNESS

1748 and it was on his arrival in England that Grandfather D'Israeli added to his original name, Israeli, the *D'*. The Italian-Jewish emigre to England, Benjamin D'Israeli, became a prosperous merchant and was identified with the Spanish and Portuguese Bevis Marks Synagogue in London. While not a particularly devout Jew he was a generous contributor to the Synagogue and even held Synagogue office at one time. Concerning Grandfather D'Israeli, Benjamin wrote years later, "My grandfather was a man of ardent character, sanguine, courageous, speculative, and fortunate; with a temper which no disappointment could disturb and a brain full of resources." And it might be said, like grandfather was also the grandson.

Isaac Disraeli who dropped the apostrophe from his family name, in a sense dropped also what Jewish residue there had reposed with his father. Never predisposed to commerce, Isaac Disraeli was given to extensive reading and research in the fields of English literature and English history. This he was able to do in comfort thanks to the fortune which his father had amassed during his business career. Thus the home of Isaac Disraeli was a salon frequented by leading English literary figures and in such an atmosphere was reared young Benjamin.

At best Isaac Disraeli's Jewish ties were very tenuous indeed. Entering into a quarrel with the lay authorities of Bevis Marks Synagogue when they elected him to the office of *Parnass*, Isaac protested his forced election and threatened to terminate his affiliation with the Congregation. Apparently the Synagogue Elders were content to refrain from pressure and no further repre-



BENJAMIN DISRAELI

English Prime Minister from 1874 to 1880.

DISRAELI AND HIS JEWISHNESS

sentations were made. When his father died, Isaac Disraeli saw the opportunity to break with the Synagogue and he had his name stricken from the membership roster. In his work, "Genius of Judaism," Isaac Disraeli attempted to explain his defection from Judaism. "The inventions of the Talmudical doctors, incorporated in their ceremonies, have bound them hand and foot, and cast them into the caverns of the lone and sullen genius of rabbinical Judaism, cutting them off from the great family of mankind and perpetuating their sorrow and their shame." This was an obvious rationale to cover up a decision made long before by Isaac Disraeli. His three sons and one daughter he had baptized in 1817 while he himself did not bother to go through the ritual. Thus did Isaac Disraeli eliminate the one obstacle which might have stood in Benjamin Disraeli's way in his rise to political eminence, his Jewishness.

Interestingly, however, Benjamin Disraeli, Isaac's son, was never cowed by the favorite taunt levelled at him through his long career, the taunt of the designation—Jew. He actually gloried in his Jewish past. His novels give expression to enthusiastic comments concerning his people; in the House of Commons he fought the battles of his people and to him fell the great honor of completing the removal of Jewish disabilities in England. In 1847 when the debate concerning the removal of remaining civil and political disabilities of English Jewry was taking place in the House of Commons, Benjamin Disraeli spoke firmly and unequivocally:

If religion is a security for righteous conduct, you have that security in the instance of the Jews, who profess a true religion. It may not be in your more comprehensive form. I do not say

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

it is THE true religion; but although they do not profess all that we profess, all that they do profess is true. You must admit, then, that in men who are subject to the Divine revelations that you acknowledge, whose morals are founded on the sacred oracles to which we all bow, that, as far as religion can be a security for their conduct—for their public morality and justice—you have in the religion of the Jews the best sanction in the world except that of your own Christianity . . . The very reason for admitting the Jews is because they can show so near an affinity to you. Where is your Christianity if you do not believe in their Judaism?

In the concluding portion of his impassioned argument on behalf of the Jews, Disraeli urged:

In exact proportion to your faith ought to be your wish to do this great act of national justice. If you had not forgotten what you owe to this people, if you were grateful for that literature which for thousands of years has brought so much instruction and so much consolation to the sons of men, you as Christians would be only too ready to seize the first opportunity of meeting the claims of those who profess their religion. But you are influenced by the darkest superstition of the darkest ages that ever existed in this country. It is this feeling that has been kept out of this debate; indeed, that has been kept secret in yourselves—enlightened as you are—and that is unknowingly influencing you as it is influencing others abroad . . .

Eleven years were yet to go by before the Jewish Disabilities Bill was passed. In 1858, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, elected for the City of London, at long last took the Revised Oath and became the first English Jew to sit in the House of Commons.

Many were the legends that surrounded the dramatic Disraeli and in particular were popular those which related to his Jewish origin. Newspapers in the 1870's abound in stories and speculations concerning England's legendary Prime Minister who served in that lordly position from 1874 to 1880. In January, 1874, one month

DISRAELI AND HIS JEWISHNESS

before Benjamin Disraeli became Prime Minister, the *Manitoba Free Press* paid tribute to his trials and triumphs:²

He sought no help from outside. He paid court to no man, and what must be strangest of all to aspiring politicians, to no newspaper. Social prejudices stood in front of him like a wall of iron. Not the least of these prejudices was that which related to the race from which he sprung. His family traced its descent from the pure Sephardim stock; they were Hebrews of the Hebrews. For two generations at least, they had been Christians, but still the favorite taunt levelled at Mr. Disraeli was founded on his Jewish origin. These reproaches, as usual he met with defiance. So far from repudiating his race, he has always gloried in it. He fought its battles in the House of Commons, and to him fell the honor of completing the removal of Jewish disabilities. He succeeded in gaining for the Jews the right to sit in the House of Commons, and he has done more to break down the unjust prejudice against them than any man of his generation. He has made people at least understand that they do not insult him by calling him a Jew—they only pay him a compliment.¹

In July, 1878, the *Free Press* rhapsodized about Disraeli in superlative terms:³

Nothing like this has ever been witnessed in the whole history of English politics. The two Pitts were powerful ministers, so was Peel, and so was Palmerston. But neither of the Pitts played fast and loose with their party; and when Peel went further than his followers, he fell. Of him Lord Beaconsfield has written that he played upon the House of Commons as if it were an old fiddle; of Lord Beaconsfield himself it should be written that he played upon Parliament as if it were a Jew's harp.

There has been considerable conjecture of late concerning Disraeli's interest in Palestine. He was very much intrigued, from his early youth, with the Middle East as is clearly expressed in his novels "Tancred," "Alroy," and "Coningsby." In his early twenties he toured Egypt, Turkey and Palestine. In 1875, as Prime

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

Minister, Disraeli with the financial assistance of the Rothschilds, secured for England control of the Suez Canal. Disraeli, too, negotiated at the Berlin Congress of 1878 the peace terms of the Russo-Turkish War and also committed England to the protection of the Sultan's Middle Eastern possessions.

The "New York Sun" in July, 1878, as quoted by the *Free Press* carried an interesting estimate by one writer concerning Lord Beaconsfield's motives and ambitions in dealing with the Eastern Question:⁴

Beaconsfield is a Jew; Beaconsfield has negotiated the new protectorate; Syria, in which Palestine and Jerusalem are located, is one of the Turkish provinces that are placed under the British protectorate, according to the terms of the protectorate, the Governors of Turkish provinces are to be appointed with the approval of the British government, of which Beaconsfield is the Premier; the appointment of the Governor of Syria, in which are Palestine and Jerusalem, will be under the control of Beaconsfield; Beaconsfield will therefore, be the ruling power at Jerusalem over ancient Palestine; he will place a Jew in the office of Governor; the Jews will again rise to power at the seat of their ancient glory; the Laws of Moses and the Old Jewish system will be restored; and thus we may discover the key of Beaconsfield's Eastern policy and behold the consummation of his Jewish ambition.

While in recent years a pamphlet has turned up which is purported to be authored by Disraeli and in which is set forth proposals for the establishment of a Jewish State, evidence is as yet slim as to its authenticity. It may yet be proven, however, that the "New York Sun" writer was not completely off as to Beaconsfield's "Jewish ambition."

A fascinating story, even if legend, is one that appeared in the *Free Press* in May, 1879. It concerned the colorful careers of Cardinal Newman and Benjamin

DISRAELI AND HIS JEWISHNESS

Disraeli and dealt with the fascinating paradoxes in their respective lives.⁵

On most any Saturday afternoon in the last years of the first decade of the present century two boys, aged respectively nine and five, might have been seen playing in the grounds of Bloomsbury Square, London. The boys, both natives of the square, offered the most complete contrast to each other in appearance. The younger, whose head was profused with long, black, glossy ringlets, was a child of rare Jewish type of beauty, and full of life and activity.

The other was grave in demeanor, wore his hair close cut, and walked and talked and moved in a way which, in young people, is called "old fashioned." He was of pure English race and Puritanical family. The names of the children denoted these differences as much as their appearance. The one was Benjamin Disraeli, the other John Newman. Sixty-eight years have passed since then, and much has happened in the meantime, but nothing more wonderful than that the handsome little Jew boy should become a Christian and Prime Minister of Protestant England, and the Puritan lad a Catholic and a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church.

A final legend that is to be found in the *Free Press* of September, 1878, quoting the "London World" which three years before Disraeli's death raised the question—will Disraeli die a Jew?⁶

Everybody knows how fond Lord Beaconsfield is of surprise. One of the most intelligent Jews I have ever met with said to me the other day, "He has yet a great surprise in store for you, and it will be the greatest act of his life. He will die a Jew and be buried beside his father in the graveyard of the Jews at Mile End. He was baptized by a trick of the poet Rogers, and no Jew is ever sincere in renouncing the religion of his race. He will die a Jew I tell you." There is something to be said in favor of this view, but I believe the greatest charm of Christianity in the eyes of Lord Beaconsfield, and its firm hold over him, is contained in the fact which he himself has pointed out in the celebrated 24th chapter of Lord George Bentinck's biography, that one half of the civilized world worships a Jew

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

and the other half a Jewess. A man so strongly impressed with such a view as Lord Beaconsfield must no doubt feel that it keeps and flatters his pride of race quite enough to keep him true to the religion of his knighthood, and to make him content with burial beside his wife instead of beside his father.

Even at death's-bed legend took play, when after Disraeli's passing it was related that he died with the *Shema* on his lips.⁷ On April 19, 1881, Disraeli died and his *yahrzeit* was commemorated annually thereafter in England by the wearing of his favorite flower—primrose, and the anniversary of Disraeli's passing came to be known as Primrose Day. As for his burial place, Benjamin Disraeli, artful dodger to the end, chose to be buried on his Hughenden Estate beside his beloved wife, neutral ground for a Christian who had a fond admiration for his Judaism.

V

Louis Riel — Prophet of a New World

ON NOVEMBER 16, 1885, Louis Riel was hanged in the Regina jail-yard in punishment for "high treason," a charge which had arisen out of the Metis revolt of which Riel had been the leader. The Riel trial had excited great interest in Canada, the sympathies for Riel aroused among French-Canadians and the Indian half-breeds, the antipathies against him stirred among Canadian Protestants, particularly of the Orangemen in Ontario whose fellow Orangeman, Thomas Scott, had been killed in the first Riel uprising of 1870. Seventy years have passed since Louis Riel's trial and hanging and hardly a year moves by that does not produce a considerable number of articles and studies evaluating the career of the strange prairie mystic and self-appointed prophet.

Of one-eighth Indian blood, Louis Riel was born and reared in what was to become the Province of Manitoba, a development due in no small part to Riel's leadership which had kindled the 1870 uprising in Red River Valley. At an early age Riel came under the personal influence of Bishop Alexander Tache and at the age of fourteen young Louis was chosen by Tache to continue his studies for the priesthood at Montreal College. A sensitive, deeply thoughtful and independent youth, Louis Riel struggled with Catholic theology and the Church's authoritarianism. His first inner misgivings gave rise to serious questioning and these in turn led to outright rejection of Catholic beliefs.

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

In 1864, Louis Riel's father died. The son, who had a tremendous admiration for his proud and fiery father, was deeply grieved by his father's death and suffered a severe depression of mind and spirit. By now, too, the burden of his inner conflicts became intolerable; it was at this time that he finally determined to break with the priesthood and to turn instead to the study of law.

In later years it became evident that Louis Riel had held illusions concerning himself in the role of a messiah even in his early student years. As he saw it, he was to be the deliverer of his Metis people—but not only the Metis were to be emancipated by him. Somehow in his turmoiled mind the fate of the Jews and other oppressed minorities came to be bound up with the fate of the buffeted, stateless Metis. This "Messianic-Jewish" complex first manifested itself when still in the throes of his religious conflicts and grieving over his father's death he informed his Catholic instructors at Montreal College that he was really not Louis Riel but rather Mordecai, a Jew. When challenged by the bishop for an explanation for his irrational statement Louis Riel retreated and explained that it was only a momentary whim to which he added, his mind searching, "All the same it could be." Obviously at this stage the concept of himself in the role of a deliverer had not yet crystallized itself, nor was it firmly rooted in his groping mind.

We do not know for how long Louis Riel continued to imagine himself a Jew. In a letter written by him to a priest at St. Boniface while he was articling with the Montreal lawyer, Rudolphe La Flamme, Riel reiterates his ostensible Jewishness and reinforces his con-

tention with a strange story of his mixed identity. He explains that he came to Canada at an early age and resembled the authentic Riel like a twin brother but that the original Louis Riel was drowned in the Mississippi River and that he was adopted in the dead boy's stead. He is therefore entitled to none of his father's property. Furthermore, because he is David Mordecai, the Jew, he appeals to mankind to assist his race and offer them redress for the wrongs committed against them. In truth, he, David Mordecai, is a new messiah whose mission it is to save the Jews and the Gentiles.

Restless and unfulfilled, Louis Riel abandoned his legal studies in 1868 and returned to Red River. He was then twenty-four years old and unknown in the settlement. He had neither profession nor trade and was dependent upon family resources for his existence. But he was not without zeal and energy and these he was soon able to lend to a growing cause which arose out of the chaotic conditions in Red River, a cause which grew more mighty with each passing day.

In March, 1869, representatives of the Canadian Government concluded arrangements for the purchase of Rupert's Land for the price of 300,000 pounds. The Hon. William McDougall, who had helped to negotiate the annexation of Rupert's Land to the Dominion of Canada, was appointed the first lieutenant-governor of the territory. Travelling from Ottawa through north-central United States to assume his post, McDougall found himself on October 30, 1869, at Pembina, Minnesota, the point of entry into the Canadian Red River region. News of Governor McDougall's pending arrival at Fort Garry preceded him and the unhappy Metis population were aroused. (In the newly annexed colony

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

of Canada were to be found 5,000 Metis, 5,000 Scotch and English half-breeds and about 2,000 people of British and Canadian origin.) Disturbed earlier by the appearance of government surveyors who had arbitrarily set boundaries upon Metis farm-lands, McDougall's imminent arrival added stimulus to their already fevered feelings. What was to become of them, of their land, of their status? In this common condition of fear and mistrust they rallied around Louis Riel, set up the National Council of the Metis with Riel as secretary, in fact, the leader. Riel and the Council proceeded to send a message to McDougall at Pembina ordering him to stay out of the territory. To enforce its order the Metis Council sent an armed band of men to set up barricades along the road leading into Fort Garry.

The Hon. William McDougall made a series of attempts from his Pembina headquarters to negotiate a successful entry into Fort Garry by making contacts with elements friendly to his cause but to no avail. In the interim Riel was strengthening his position by assuming increased powers of authority. McDougall, exasperated by his complete lack of success over a full month's time, in desperation, issued a proclamation in the name of Queen Victoria in which was declared that the transfer of Rupert's Land was consummated on December 1, and that the territory was now part of Canada. At Fort Garry it was quickly ascertained that McDougall's royal proclamation was wholly unauthorized and Riel's position was thereby strengthened. McDougall's supporters in the territory capitulated to the Metis Council and William McDougall, on December 18, returned to Upper Canada. On December 27, Louis Riel was elected president of the Metis Council.

LOUIS RIEL — PROPHET OF A NEW WORLD

At age twenty-five Louis Riel, the dreamer, was a man of tangible achievements. Nor had one drop of blood been shed in all of the revolutionary period until one of the Canada supporters at Fort Garry, Thomas Scott, foolhardily challenged Riel's authority and finally provoked a court-martial for armed revolt and insubordination. Tried by a jury of six men, Scott was sentenced to death and on March 4, 1870, he was shot by a firing-squad.

For about nine months, from December, 1869, to August 23, 1870, Louis Riel served as President of the Provisional Government of Assiniboia. He served ably and proved himself an astute administrator and negotiator on behalf of the territory and its peoples. In negotiations with Ottawa, Riel's government made fair and sensible demands, primary among the demands being the confederation of Assiniboia with the Dominion of Canada as a full-fledged province, an achievement that might not have been forthcoming for at least several decades had it not been pressed for by Riel's government. Through the List of Rights submitted by the Assiniboia Provisional Government to Ottawa was also secured a guarantee of land-grants to the half-breed inhabitants. On May 12, 1870, the Manitoba Act was passed in Canada's House of Commons. Riel's bill of rights was the basis of the Manitoba Act which made of Manitoba a full-fledged province to be governed by an appointed lieutenant-governor and an elected legislature. The amnesty clause under which no member of Riel's Provisional Government or any person acting under its orders was to be held liable for any action occurring during the period prior to the assumption of sovereignty



LOUIS RIEL

by Canada was not incorporated in the Manitoba Act. However, Riel's government was assured through its representatives who had negotiated with Ottawa authorities that this would, in fact, be honored.

In August, 1870, the Canadian troops arrived in Manitoba. But prior to their arrival Louis Riel had been informed that Col. Garnet Wolseley's army consisted in the main of Ontario Orangemen who were determined to avenge Thomas Scott's death. The Canadian Government had failed to give further support to its earlier verbal promises that amnesty would be carried out. It would have been foolish, under these circumstances, for Louis Riel to remain in Manitoba and he set out for Pembina, the border town in the United States across the Manitoba boundary. As Riel left for Pembina with an adjutant he was heard to say, "Tell the people that he who has ruled in Fort Garry only yesterday is now a homeless wanderer with nothing to eat but two dried fish." Nor was Riel's departure premature. The Province of Ontario, in 1871, placed a five thousand dollars price on Riel's head.

Wanderer or not, Riel ran for Parliament in Provencher, Manitoba, and though absent from the district, was elected to Parliament. In March, 1874, Riel arrived in Ottawa and though police were alerted to take him prisoner, he managed to be sworn into office and quickly made his escape. But because he could not take his seat, Riel was eventually expelled. In 1875 a complete amnesty was proclaimed by the Canadian Government to all involved in the uprising of 1870, except Riel and two of his aides. Riel was officially banished for a five-year period and his political rights taken from him for life. Riel suffered mental depressions, even breakdown, and

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

at one time was confined to Longue Point Asylum near Montreal. Recovering his health, Louis Riel eventually settled in St. Peter's, Montana, where he married a half-breed girl and taught school. Two children were born to Riel and his wife, and he might have remained in the quiet Montana town for the rest of his life, but destiny had a further appointment for Riel. From Saskatchewan there came in 1884 a delegation of Metis. The Canadian Government was following the earlier pattern in Manitoba. The Metis were alarmed over their future and the disposition of their lands. Would Riel come back and lead them in their fight against Ottawa? Riel came.

On arrival in Saskatchewan, Louis Riel addressed gatherings, drafted a new bill of rights, sent petitions to Ottawa. He counselled patience. But again Ottawa bungled and the Metis were aroused to bitter anger. Riel set up once more a provisional government and an order was sent to the superintendent of the Mounted Police at Crozier Lake urging the surrender of all supplies. Superintendent Crozier was angered by the challenge and with ninety-nine men met Riel and his armed Metis at Duck Lake. A short battle followed in which twelve of Crozier's men were killed and twenty-five wounded. This was Spring, 1885. Shortly thereafter an Indian massacre inspired by Gabriel Dumont, Riel's hot-headed adjutant, took place at Frog Lake. The Canadian Government suddenly realized the proportions of the Saskatchewan uprising and dispatched General Frederick Middleton who raised an army of five thousand soldiers to quell the revolt.

Dumont, Riel's military adviser, advocated an active offensive against the oncoming Middleton army. He

urged that they be handled as the Metis would handle the buffalo of the prairie in hunt. The Metis could easily stampede the soldiers. It was easily possible to harass them, to attack their detraining depots, dynamite the railroad. But Riel, who always disdained bloodshed, adamantly refused to allow Dumont to carry out his proposed military tactics. Thus did Riel permit Middleton and his army to arrive at Fish Creek, some eighteen miles from Batoche, Saskatchewan, where Riel's headquarters were situated. On April 24, 1885, the battle of Fish Creek constituted the first contact between Riel's modest forces and Middleton's sizable army. The Metis succeeded in staving off further battle until about two weeks later. Fish Creek was a Metis victory. On May 9, 1885, the Middleton forces began their attack on Batoche. For four days the battle continued. The odds, which included a large army and the introduction of the Gatling machine-gun for the first time in military warfare, were overwhelmingly against the modest Metis forces. By May 13 the fighting was over and on May 15 Louis Riel walked into the Middleton army encampment and surrendered himself. He could easily have escaped, as did Gabriel Dumont and others, but he chose captivity instead. Why? It was Riel's hope that his trial would focus attention upon the unhappy lot of the Metis and the Indians which, in turn, would finally achieve for them—justice.

Held as a prisoner in the Regina jail, Louis Riel's trial began on July 28, 1885. High treason which carried with it the penalty of death was the crime with which Riel was charged. Tried before Mr. Justice Hugh Richardson, a stipendiary magistrate, and a jury of six, Louis Riel was defended by F. S. Lemieux and Charles

Fitzpatrick. But Riel and his lawyers were strongly at variance with each other. Riel's legal defenders were determined to prove their client insane and therefore wholly irresponsible for the uprising against the government. *Louis Riel was determined to convey to the world the injustice committed against his people.* For five tense days the trial proceeded. Riel tugged at the bit as his lawyers attempted to build up the picture of an insane man, wholly irrational, completely irresponsible for his acts. Frequently Riel arose and attempted to speak his piece, to protest his sanity. Riel's lawyers appealed to the court to have their client silenced. Mr. Justice Richardson promised Louis Riel the full opportunity to speak, to present his case but in the meanwhile he urged Riel to allow his lawyers to proceed on his behalf.

At last, on Saturday morning, August 31, 1885, after Charles Fitzpatrick had made an excellent two-hour plea of insanity on Riel's behalf, Louis Riel was permitted to address the court. Riel's plea was equal in quality and stature to the pleas made by champions of decent causes in times gone by. Riel's plea was classic.

"It would be easy," began Louis Riel, "for me today to plead insanity, because the circumstances are such as to excite any man under the natural excitement of what is taking place today." Here Riel apologized, "I cannot speak English very well, but I am trying to do so, because most of those here speak English."

"The excitement which my trial causes me would justify me not to appear as usual, but with my mind out of its ordinary condition. I hope, with the help of God, I will maintain calmness and decorum as suits the Honorable Court, this Honorable Jury."

Riel related carefully the history of the Metis cause and his own role in it. On his arrival from Montana in 1884 he found abject poverty among the Metis and the Indians. "When I came into the North-West in July I found the Indians suffering, I found the half-breeds eating the rotten pork of the Hudson's Bay Company, and getting sick and weak every day." Riel found, too, that the whites were unprivileged. "I saw they were deprived of responsible government, I saw that they were deprived of their public liberties." He had tried to the utmost of his ability to achieve redress for these injustices by peaceful means. "We have made petitions, I have made petitions with others to the Canadian Government, asking them to relieve the condition of this country."

The attempt had been made to prove him insane because he believed he had "a mission." Even now he reasserts that he has a mission nor was there anything insane about it. There were others who had faith. Archbishop Bourget had said, "Riel has no narrow views, he is a man to accomplish great things." Father Bruno of Worcester had said to him, "Riel, God has put an object into your hands the cause of the triumph of religion in the world. Take care, you will succeed when most believe you have lost."

For fifteen years he had suffered. He had been libeled. "I know that through the grace of God I am the founder of Manitoba. — I believe by what I have suffered for fifteen years, by what I have done for Manitoba and the people of the North-West that my words are worth something." Nor did he wish to offend his listeners. "If I give offence I do not speak to insult.

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

Yes, you are the pioneers of civilization, the whites are the pioneers of civilization, but they bring among the Indians demoralization."

What of his religious views which had been considered during the trial? What was so insane about his views? "My insanity, Your Honors, Gentlemen of the Jury, is that I wish to leave Rome aside inasmuch as it is the cause of division between the Catholics and the Protestants." Riel went on to say that he hoped some day even if two hundred years later his "children will shake hands with the Protestants of the New World in a friendly manner. I do not wish those evils which exist in Europe to be continued, as much as I can influence it, among the half-breeds. I do not wish that to be repeated in America. . . ."

Mention had been made by witnesses during the trial that Louis Riel had advocated a division of the North-West among seven nationalities. Was that so insane? Not at all, protested Riel. "We will give them each a seventh to show that we are not fanatics, that we are not partisans, that we do not wish only for the Catholics, but that we have consideration for those who are not Catholics." He had a vision of Italians, Irish, Bavarians, Poles, Belgians, Danes *and Jews* settling on the land so plentifully available. "There is a beautiful island, Vancouver, and I think the Belgians will be happy there, *and the Jews who are looking for a country for 1800 years, the knowledge of which the nations have not been able to attain yet. Perhaps they will hear my voice one day and on the other side of the mountains while the waves of the Pacific will chant sweet music for them to console their hearts for the mourning of 1800 years.*"

LOUIS RIEL — PROPHET OF A NEW WORLD

In concluding his address to the court Louis Riel said, "If they declare me insane, I have been astray. I have been astray not as an impostor, but according to my conscience." Mr. Justice Richardson gave his charge to the jury and on the afternoon of August 1, 1885, the jury, after deliberation, announced to the court that they had found the defendant, Louis Riel, guilty. Unsuccessful appeals were made on Riel's behalf to the Court of Queen's Bench in Manitoba, to the Privy Council in London, England. Louis Riel was hanged in the Regina jail-yard on November 16, 1885. Riel had said to the court, "If I am guilty of high treason I say I am the prophet of the new world."

VI

The Story of Three Messengers

MESHIULOCHIM, Jewish messengers or solicitors of charity, have been a long-time phenomena in Jewish history. From early centuries, Jews, wherever they might be found in numbers, organized charitable efforts on behalf of their brethren in the Holy Land. These efforts were stimulated by the deep religious longings which Jews had for Zion, and their desire to assist the remnants in Palestine to devote their lives to learning and piety, thus promoting "the spiritual interests of the entire people" wherever in the world they might be. Palestinian Jews, who became strongly dependent on charity from abroad, sent representatives into various communities to strengthen the giving, to arouse anew interests in Zion that might be flagging.¹

Ezra Stiles, Protestant minister of Newport, Rhode Island, immediately before the American Revolution and subsequently the first president of Yale University, kept careful diaries in which he recorded his experiences with Jews whom he came to know intimately, among them one of the earliest *mesbulochim* to arrive on the American scene. This most colorful pioneer messenger, concerning whom Stiles wrote very fully, was Hayyim Isaac Carigal. Born in 1733 in Hebron, Palestine, Carigal was ordained at the early age of seventeen. An adventuresome youth, he set out on his world travels at twenty, visiting Jewish communities of the Middle East, France, England, the West Indies and America.

Hayyim Isaac Carigal arrived in Newport in 1771

THE STORY OF THREE MESSENGERS

and soon after his arrival the young Palestinian rabbi made the acquaintance of Ezra Stiles with whom Carigal formed a fast friendship which was to last for many years, even after Carigal's departure from the seaport town. It must have been a colorful sight to behold the tall, neat, bearded and well-dressed rabbi in company with the dignified Protestant minister walking through Newport streets deeply engrossed in discussions of theological import. Their conversations were in Hebrew, a language which Ezra Stiles had mastered well. After one such conversation, Stiles wrote in his diary on March 30, 1773:

This afternoon the rabbi visited me in the company of Mr. Lopez. The rabbi is about 39, a large man, neat and well dressed in the Turkish habit. We spoke at length about the Talmuds (he is more interested in the Babylonian Talmud) and about the changes in the Hebrew language during the various periods.

In another diary entry of April 6, 1773, Ezra Stiles summarized his meeting with Rabbi Carigal by writing:

We conversed much and freely. He is learned and truly modest, far more so than I ever saw a Jew.

Before Carigal left Newport, Rhode Island, the rabbi promised Ezra Stiles that their friendship and contact would be maintained. On July 17, 1773, Stiles wrote that the rabbi promised that

he would always write to me from any part of the world wherever he should be. He again took leave of me very affectionately praying God to bless me. I told him I parted from him with great reluctance, and should ever retain an affection for him—that it was probable we might never see each other in the land of the living and wished we might after death meet together



RABBI HAYYIM CARIGAL
Palestinian rabbi and messenger for charity.

THE STORY OF THREE MESSENGERS

in the Garden of Eden and there rejoice with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and with the soul of the Messiah till the Resurrection. He wishes me reciprocally and my family every blessing from the heart, had my name in his book, and should send it to Jerusalem, where I should be known as I was here.

Nor was Ezra Stiles' name alone inscribed in Carigal's book. The impressive rabbi visited a number of Jewish communities in the American colonies as well as Jewish communities of the West Indies where he was able to inscribe the names of Jewish donors on behalf of the Holy Land. His mission as *meshuloch* completed, Hayyim Isaac Carigal accepted a rabbinic post in Barbados where there then existed a large and prosperous Jewish community. Until his death in 1777 Carigal was the respected rabbi of Barbados.²

A variety of Palestinian messengers visited America after Carigal's time, succeeding in greater or lesser degree in their efforts on behalf of the impoverished Jews in Palestine. Not all were received too enthusiastically. Some messengers were unauthorized and therefore aroused suspicions among American Jewish leaders. But certainly there were those who were fully bona fide in their mission and their records remained for scrutiny in our own time.

It is quite likely that messengers visited early the Jewish community of Montreal which had come into being through the establishment of the Shearith Israel Congregation in 1768. For a certainty an impressive messenger made his appearance in Montreal in October, 1848.

Rabbi Nissim ben Shelomo arrived in Montreal two days before Yom Kippur to raise funds for the oppressed and downtrodden Jews of Persia. The Persian rabbi was

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

warmly received by the eminent rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Dr. Abraham De Sola. Unable to preach in English, the Persian rabbi prevailed upon Dr. De Sola to make appeal from the pulpit to the Shearith Israel congregants on behalf of their Persian co-religionists. On Yom Kippur Eve, Dr. De Sola made a grandiloquent plea for generous giving to assist the Jews of distant Persia. A kindly and humanitarian individual, the Montreal rabbi who was exceedingly popular as a lecturer in the community-at-large decided to carry Persian Jewry's needs to the public.

On October 26, 1848, Dr. De Sola addressed a large audience in Montreal's Temperance Hall. In attendance and adding impressiveness to the occasion were an array of dignitaries, among them the Speaker of the House, the Attorney-General, academicians, judges, clergymen and journalists. A gifted speaker, Dr. De Sola gained the unanimous sympathy of his audience through his dramatic presentation of the sorrowful lot of Persian Jews. Clergymen in attendance were so moved as to preach on the subject from their own pulpits the following Sunday. Rev. Cordner of Montreal's Unitarian Church made a fervent plea, saying, in part:

The feelings of Christians towards Jews in former times were absurd and wrong. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem caused our Lord to be put to death some eighteen centuries since. But even their descendants should not be held by us as responsible for this, still less the Jews of other times and places. We might as well hold all Catholics responsible for the massacre of Bartholomew's Day, or all the Episcopal Protestants for the rigour and tyranny of Laud, or all the Scotch Presbyterians for the murder of the Bishop of St. Andrew's, or all the Calvinists for the murder of Servetus. Christians are bound by the law to treat all men kindly and with paternal sympathy.

THE STORY OF THREE MESSENGERS

Rabbi Nissim ben Shlomo's six-weeks' stay in Montreal was rewarded with success. Though almost completely blind and severely handicapped by his inability to speak in a familiar tongue, the Persian rabbi made a most favorable impression. When some months later the authenticity of Rabbi Nissim's mission was questioned through the columns of "The Occident," an American Anglo-Jewish newspaper, Dr. De Sola replied through the same paper's columns with a vigorous defense, indicating that Rabbi Nissim refused to accept the funds personally but requested instead that the funds be transmitted to Sir Moses Montefiore in England. In part, Dr. De Sola wrote:

In justice to Rabbi Nissim, I must state that his bearing, during the six weeks he resided in Montreal, was such as to leave a most favorable and gratifying recollection, not only among his Hebrew friends but among many intelligent and respectable Christians also.

Thus was exonerated the Persian Rabbi Nissim ben Shelomo, early messenger to Canada.³

Winnipeg had its introduction to a messenger in August, 1889. "A Rabbi from far off Jerusalem," reported the *Free Press*, "is in the city collecting from his Israelitic brethren to erect schools in his home for the purpose of teaching children of the poorer classes." In a subsequent newspaper account this *meshuloch* was identified as Dr. Levi, a citizen of Jerusalem. As in the case of the Persian Rabbi Nissim, Dr. Levi too was blind and was therefore accompanied by his son. Dressed "in the costume of his country" he wore a long robe of scarlet colored silk as his outer garment. Dr. Levi carried with him a large and impressive volume containing

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

letters explaining his cause. Among the many documents contained in the volume were endorsements by consuls of several nations as well as the endorsements of other men in authority.⁴

Mr. Philip Brown, a highly respected Jewish resident of Winnipeg, acted as spokesman on behalf of Dr. Levi. Mr. Brown informed a reporter that the messenger had been a medical man before he had lost his sight. Dr. Levi was an erudite gentleman who spoke eleven languages. Personally in good financial circumstances, according to Philip Brown, the doctor had "undertaken the cause of the poor in Palestine, multitudes of whom subsist on charity." It was Dr. Levi's ambition to establish a system of agricultural and industrial schools for the training of poor Jewish youth in Palestine that they might eventually become independent and self-supporting. For this object he was in the midst of visiting many countries and was forming in each community societies to aid in the collection of funds. Dr. Levi sought no funds for himself personally and asked that all funds raised be forwarded "to the consuls of their several nations in Jerusalem or Japan." When Philip Brown was asked what was to be done locally in answer to Dr. Levi's appeal, he said that a society would be organized in Winnipeg at a later date. The postponement of organization, explained Brown, was due to the fact that "at present, the people will not be able to raise funds to send, as they will require their means for the building of their synagogue."

To attest to his generous character, Dr. Levi of Jerusalem presented to Shaarey Zedek Congregation a valuable silk pulpit cover and he promised further

THE STORY OF THREE MESSENGERS

to send from Jerusalem, upon his return, a silk curtain for new Shaarey Zedek's ark, the value of the gift being estimated at two hundred dollars.

Rather anti-climatic was Dr. Levi's appearance at a meeting of the Winnipeg Board of Aldermen. Appearing before them he made "the strange request that railway passes be furnished for him and his son to Montreal." He stated to the city fathers that the Mayor of Vancouver had extended to them that courtesy, tickets to Winnipeg. Furthermore, Dr. Levi said that the authorities of China, Japan and other countries had accorded to them similar assistance "to forward them on their journey." But the Winnipeg Aldermen were unmoved, refusing Dr. Levi and his son the travelling facilities which they had received elsewhere. Concluded the reporter:

The request was so entirely novel in their experience, they probably did not entirely appreciate the beneficent object.

Dr. Levi and son had to look to their own resources and they left Winnipeg in early September, 1889.

VII

The Birth of Shaarey Zedek

ACCORDING to an 1887 newspaper survey of Winnipeg's churches there were three separate Jewish congregations in the city at that time. There was a "German synagogue" which conducted its services without the assistance of a rabbi; the "Congregation Bethel of Israel" which enjoyed the ministrations of Rabbi Friedman; the "Sons of Israel" served by Rabbi Ferguson. The 1887 *Free Press* survey indicated that efforts had been made for several years past to build one dignified synagogue in order to eliminate the above-store sanctuaries but that the attempt had not been successful, for unity was lacking among the Jewish populace. Because of the existing divisions among Winnipeg Hebrews the general citizenry were prone to underestimate whatever progress had actually been made by the Jews. "A much more favourable as well as a more correct opinion would be formed if the progress could be continued." Further editorialized the writer of the church survey, "United, the Hebrews would form a congregation of very respectable members, and they would soon possess a building creditable alike to themselves and the city."

Two more years passed from the time of the *Free Press*' admonition to the Winnipeg Hebrews concerning unity, until a tangible goal was to be achieved, when Shaarey Zedek was to become a reality. During the two-year interregnum, between 1887 and 1889, the leadership of the Jewish community concentrated itself

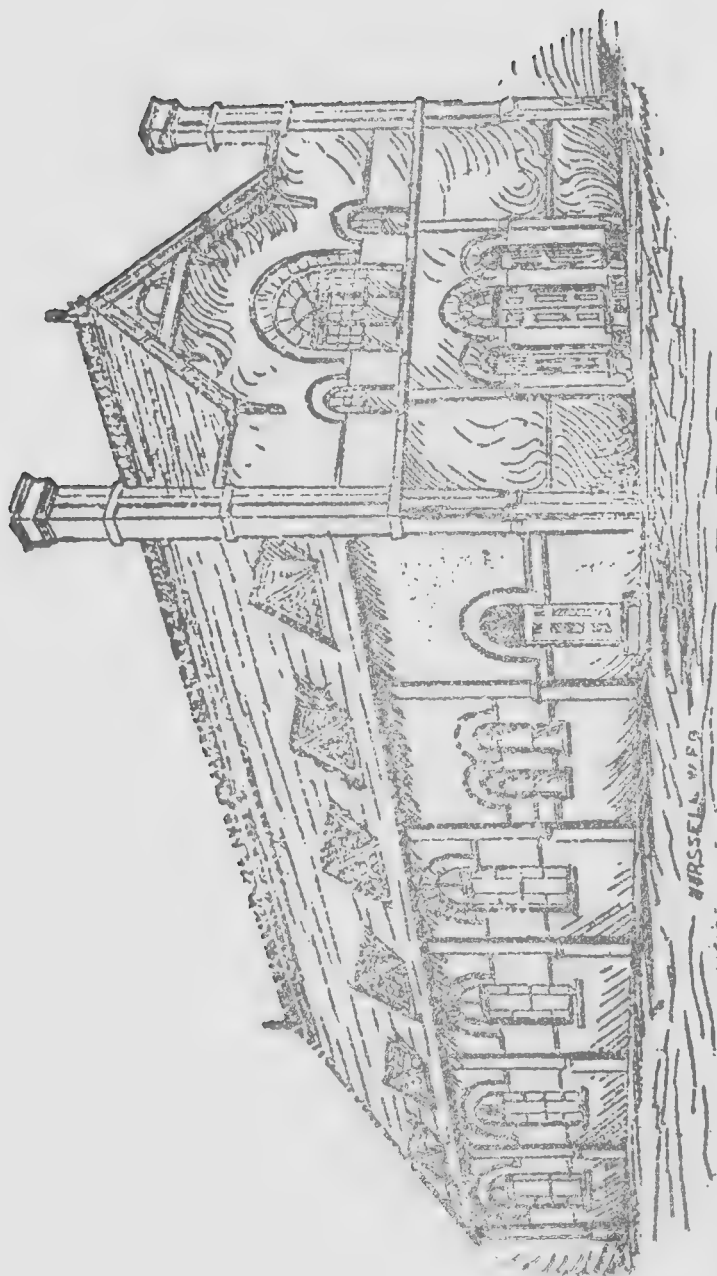
THE BIRTH OF SHAAREY ZEDEK

in fewer hands thus leading to less anarchical conditions than had prevailed until that time. The united effort did bring results.

In August, 1889, a large number of the Jewish residents met in Albert Hall under the chairmanship of J. J. Shragge and the assemblage with enthusiastic unanimity accepted a resolution that immediate steps be taken to erect a synagogue. Within the next thirty days the amount of \$2,175 was subscribed towards the larger goal of \$7,000 and on September 3, 1889, the corner-stone laying ceremony took place, on the site which had been acquired from W. G. Fonseca at the corner of King and Common Streets.

Somewhat indicative of the good will which was engendered towards the Jewish citizenry of Winnipeg was the broad community interest that was demonstrated in the corner-stone laying proceedings conducted under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Free Masons, with Canon J. D. O'Meara, Grand Master, presiding. The esteemed church leader called upon Mr. Philip Brown, Chairman of the Shaarey Zedek Building Committee, to "address and further explain the object of our assembling," which Brown did in cogent manner. Said Philip Brown:

A sacred task is about to be performed; a cornerstone is about to be laid for a house of worship. You have assembled to witness a symbolical, time-honored ceremony and to testify by your presence to your deep interest in the erection of the projected edifice. Upon this foundation we have resolved to erect a house devoted to the worship of the Most High Creator and Governor of the Universe, the Preserver of mankind, the Guardian of Israel, a house worthy of the name we bear and the religion we profess. At the completion of this edifice we will possess a new home wherein to assemble from new moon to new moon, from



THE FIRST SHAAREY ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE

From a *Tribune* sketch at the time of its dedication.

THE BIRTH OF SHAAREY ZEDEK

Sabbath to Sabbath, in order to pour out the inmost feelings of our hearts in prayer and in praise to the Omnipotent and All-kind Ruler of the Universe. Let us trust, my friends, that this structure will be a noble monument to a pious enterprise, a bright ornament to our faith and our people, and a just pride of its founders, the community of Winnipeg.

After dwelling at length upon the historic development of the synagogue, Philip Brown turned to the Grand Master, Canon O'Meara, and said:

As Hiram of Tyre assisted King Solomon in building the first Temple so do we ask you, most worshipped sir, to lay the corner-stone of the first Jewish synagogue in this province; so do we approach you with the assurance of a response to assist us in our undertaking, as did King Solomon when he called for one of the patron architects of our ancient and honorable order. We also ask the help of all lovers of religious liberty, regardless of class, creed or nationality and we feel from our knowledge of the liberality of the people of Winnipeg, that our appeal will not be in vain.

To Canon O'Meara was given an illuminated scroll acknowledging his participation in the historic occasion. Canon O'Meara proceeded to lay the corner-stone and upon completion of the task spoke about the principles and teachings of Masonry confirming "the appropriateness of the Masons laying the corner-stone, as did the first Grand Master and founder of the order, according to tradition, King Solomon who built the Temple at Jerusalem." And the event was closed with a benediction by the Grand Chaplain.

Shaarey Zedek was erected under the guidance of a Building Committee consisting of Philip Brown, chairman; Tevel Finkelstein, treasurer; David Ripstein, George Frankfurter, Rev. Abraham Benjamin, Simon Ripstein,

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

Jacob Shragge, A. Coppelman, W. Gelgeran, William Goldbloom, Hiram Weidman, Jacob Heiman and H. Goldstaub, committee members. The structure was of brick, finished on the inside with oiled wood. The windows were of colored glass and while the furnishings were not too elaborate they were tasteful and adequate. The Ark, according to reports, was said to be "one of the finest in Canada," made of Italian marble. The seating capacity of the new synagogue was for two hundred and fifty persons.

On the evening of Thursday, March 20, 1890, the synagogue was dedicated to its high purpose with an overflow congregation in attendance. Two hundred and fifty invitations to the Dedication Service had been extended to Gentiles of the community. The Jewish congregation expressed its deep appreciation thusly for the more than seventeen hundred dollars that had been contributed by Winnipeg Christians towards the synagogue building fund.

The services were conducted by Dr. Samuel Marks, a Minneapolis rabbi, who was assisted by Shaarey Zedek's first clergyman, Rev. Abraham Benjamin. At six-thirty, on March 20, the officers and members of the congregation assembled in their old structure at 65 King Street and from there they proceeded to the new building, the officers of the congregation carrying the Torahs. Upon gathering in the vestibule of new Shaarey Zedek, Rabbi Marks exclaimed:

Open unto me the gates of righteousness that
I may enter through them to praise the Lord.

Whereupon Rev. Benjamin who was within the synagogue replied:

THE BIRTH OF SHAAREY ZEDEK

This is the gate of the Lord into which the
righteous shall enter.

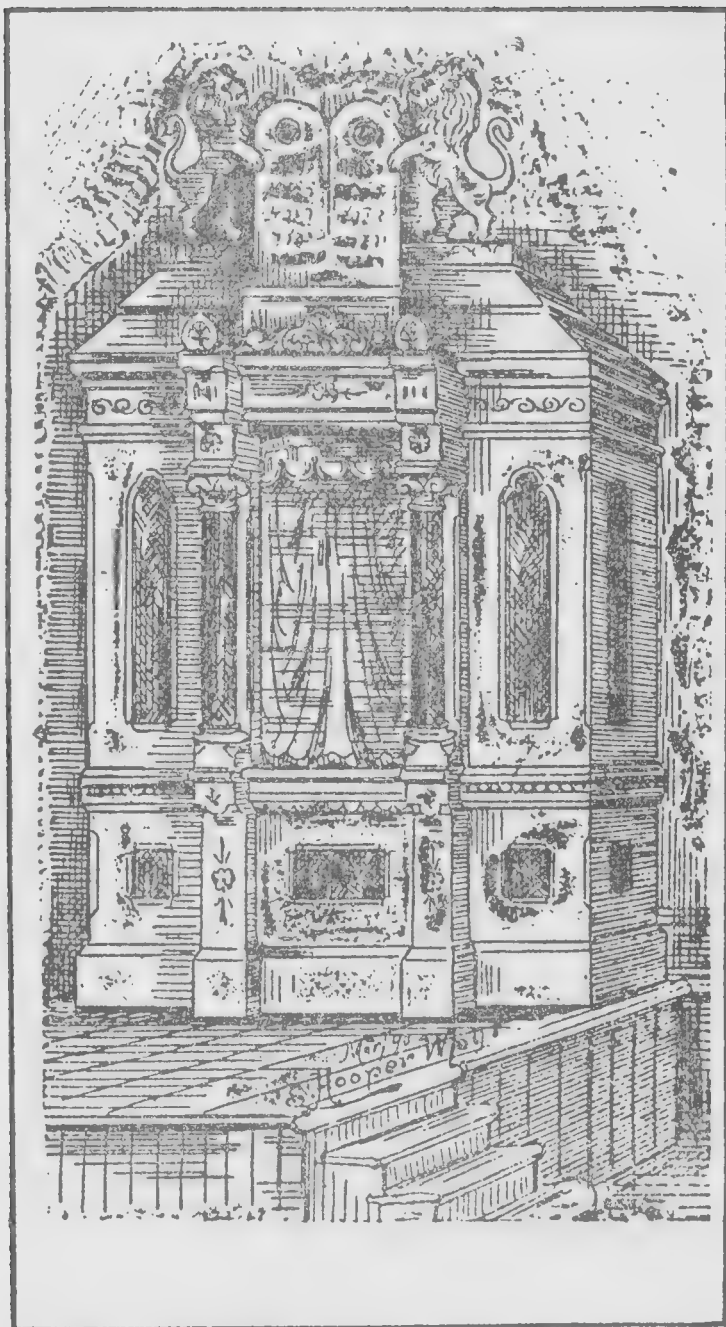
A silver key was handed to His Worship, Mayor Pearson, by two girls, Dinah Benjamin and Mary Ripstein. In turn, Mayor Pearson gave the key to Philip Brown, president of the congregation, who honored Simon Ripstein with the opening of the doors. The procession then moved down the aisles of the synagogue up to the Ark, preceded by Rabbi Marks who chanted the prayer "How Beautiful Are Thy Tents, O Jacob." The Torah scrolls were laid on the reading table and the ceremony of lighting the Perpetual Lamp followed. The gas which had been burning low was turned on full when the rabbi uttered the words:

And God said let there be light, and there
was light.

The sudden transformation from semi-darkness to light was most effective.

The Ark was opened and Rabbi Marks recited Psalm XXIV. The scrolls were then carried seven times around the *bimah*, a special psalm being recited during each circuit. Next was offered up a prayer by Rabbi Marks for Queen Victoria, the Royal Family, the Governor-General of Canada, and for the preservation of God's Chosen People. The scrolls were then placed in the Ark.

Mr. Philip Brown, president of Shaarey Zedek, congratulated the congregation on having at last achieved a creditable house of worship "in which would be perpetuated our time honored religion." The synagogue was symbolic of sacrifices and efforts made. It represented another place of union for the scattered sons of Israel, where they could worship God as they pleased



The Ark of the Scrolls in the original Shaarey Zedek Synagogue.

THE BIRTH OF SHAAREY ZEDEK

and strengthen, in turn, their religious convictions. Mr. Brown referred to the generous assistance tendered by the people of other faiths, \$1,787 having been subscribed by Gentiles, which constituted strong evidence that "the Jews of Winnipeg were dwelling among lovers of religious liberty."

When Philip Brown had concluded, Rabbi Marks read King Solomon's dedicatory prayer after which there followed the *Ma-ariv* Service. The Minneapolis rabbi then preached the dedicatory sermon which made a very favorable impression upon the assemblage. The *Free Press* reported that "it was one of the finest addresses ever heard in Winnipeg." Rabbi Marks was described as a man of striking appearance.

His countenance, bears the stamp of intellectuality and refinement, and his short, black, silken beard, fresh complexion and glistening black eyes, which shine with considerable lustre through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, give him a distinguished presence. He is a grand speaker; his vocabulary is choice, his voice well modulated, with splendid oratorical range; his rhetoric is perfect and one could listen to his eloquence for hours with interest and pleasure.

Dr. Marks prefaced his sermon with a reference to the Jewish people and the ceremonies which had just been observed by the congregation. He then said:

The Jew is a living miracle; the ancient Egyptian, Grecian or Roman were extinct, but the Jew walks up and down the centuries as fresh, hale and hearty as ever, having all the vitality of ancient times. The Jew is also a miracle to others as to himself, through the wonderful preservation of himself and his religion after 2,000 years of persecution, unparalleled in history. The Hebrews are not known here. They are judged by the poorest specimens that are cast on these shores. By a similar test one could just as well judge Queen Victoria by a Honoluluian. If you want to see the ideal Hebrew, go into the commercial

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

marts, into the legislatures, into the walks of the universities, among the classical professors, among the philosophers, the scientists, the geologists, the astronomers,—go there and you will find the ideal Hebrew.

Rabbi Marks expounded at length upon the ceremonies seen that evening and their significance. The pressing of the scrolls to the heart, for example, was emblematic of the belief that the law of God should be carried in all walks of life, so that His influence would be with the Jews wherever they went.

The rabbi complimented the officers and congregation in having erected such a fine house of worship. The establishment of a synagogue "in this far west" was evidence that Judaism was surviving "the wildest waves of materialism." He went on to thank the Winnipeg citizenry for the assistance and friendship accorded to his brethren. He could see

by this kindly consideration and liberality a token of the time when all prejudices will have died out; when a man will not be judged by creed, but by deed; not by characteristics or nationality, but by the criticism of conduct and character.

Dr. Marks finished his sermon with the words "Be strong, continue to grow stronger in happiness and prosperity." He then pronounced the closing benediction and the proceedings were at an end.

Winnipeg Jewry beamed for many days afterwards for the high quality of their dedicatory service. Many were the compliments extended to Jewish residents by their Christian neighbors. Their synagogue at the corner of King and Common Streets had brought them a new status in the eyes of the community. An interesting postscript to Rabbi Marks' visit to Winnipeg was a

THE BIRTH OF SHAAREY ZEDEK

quotation attributed by a Minneapolis newspaper to the rabbi in which he allegedly said, on return to his home, that he liked Canadians better than Americans. The good rabbi hastened to deny such a statement, adding that "he likes Minneapolis better than Montreal or any Canadian city!"

VIII

Rosh Pina — Early Beginnings

IN late Spring, 1950, after the recalcitrant Red River had receded from the flood-ridden streets of Winnipeg and the silt had settled in the basement of old Rosh Pina Synagogue, two venerable, old gentlemen, Isaac Portigal and Pinye Cohen descended into the musty room to recover the sacred books and congregational records which might have survived the flood. In an old-style, massive book-case with glass doors whose wood was swollen and warped, they found the first minute book of the congregation. The volume, an old-fashioned ledger, the kind used to record business transactions, was covered in red linen, the color now faded, its original hue hardly discernible. It had shrunk out of form and was puffed and swollen. Many of the pages had been badly damaged by the water, the ink had run and in some instances the writing was blurred and obliterated. Yet, in spite of frequently illegible sentences and paragraphs, it was possible to reconstruct an interesting picture of a once quick and pulsating Jewish congregational existence.

Recorded in the Yiddish language, the minutes date back to August 9, 1892. The script varies from year to year revealing the character of the respective secretaries who served the congregation. The minutes of the first year, 1892 to 1893, are transcribed in an intelligent, clear fashion, letters carefully separated in each word, details fully offered. An economy of words and information as well as a running-on of letters, one overlapping the other, an impression of haste and im-

ROSH PINA — EARLY BEGINNINGS

patience, characterized the script of a succeeding scribe. In the six-year period up to 1898 the office of secretary, apparently a coveted one, was held by five different members. One of the secretaries saw fit to use a back portion of the ledger for his personal business records and we read entries concerning the sale of fish hooks, bullets, kerosene, rifles, compasses and commodities generally popular in a frontier community.

Members of early Rosh Pina consisted in the main of 1882 immigrants who had settled in Winnipeg after fleeing the Russian pogroms of 1881. Thanks to the efforts of London's Mansion House Committee these hapless Jews had been directed to the Canadian prairies where land abounded in plenty and cried out for settlers. On arrival in the muddy frontier town, the immigrants were engaged as laborers on the Canadian Pacific Railway which was then extending its tracks transcontinentally to the Pacific Coast of Canada. The country was notoriously muddy and a source of initial discouragement to all new settlers including the Scotch, Mennonites, Icelanders and French. One historian relates that a French Catholic priest, Father Lacombe, was able to persuade a group of New England French Catholics to migrate to Winnipeg in the 1880's, who, when they arrived, were severely disturbed by the rain and the mud which they encountered and they pleaded with the priest for permission to return to Massachusetts. Whereupon their Catholic padre countered, "Then go back, since you have not any more sense than to judge a country before you have looked into it. If there is deep mud here it is only because the soil is fat—the richest in America. But go back to your Massachusetts, if you want, where the soil is all pebbles, and work in the

factories!" Similarly, too, did the 1882 Jewish immigrants cry out in their mother tongue, Yiddish, "Oi hot men unz farshlept in ah misse blotte!" ("Woe unto us, we've been dragged into a horrible mud!") And working on the Canadian Pacific Railway under such circumstances was undoubtedly a sore tribulation to the newcomers. Recalling the railroading experience one early settler said, "Gearbet oif dee 'C.P. All' hoben mir vee unzere zaydess in Mitzrayim." ("We worked on the C.P.R. just as our grandfathers did in Egypt.") Yet, in fair time, in the decade from 1882 to 1892 the group established its economic well-being somewhat and began to devote its attention to the development of synagogues. Synagogues? Yes, synagogues, for there was a diversity in spiritual approach, there being in particular Ashkenazim and Sephardim. Thus in 1889, those Jewish communicants who observed the Ashkenazi prayer ritual established their own synagogue, the Shaarey Zedek, while the Sephardic ritual observers a year later sundered themselves apart into a separate congregation.

Here, then, we arrive at our primary subject of consideration, the "minits" of the Rosh Pina which begin with the theme of formally organizing a membership to the end of building a synagogue after the inadequate, earlier quarters had burned down. And the minute book reveals the language assimilatory process which had set in among the folk; among Spanish Jews it had been Ladino, among medieval German Jews it had become Yiddish—in Winnipeg, 1892, it was Henglish! Living as these people did among a predominantly Anglo-Saxon populace, they quickly acquired a speaking acquaintance with basic English. Another interesting revelation of the minute book is the manner in which

ROSH PINA — EARLY BEGINNINGS

these people gained an intimacy and facility with parliamentary procedure. Among the Jewish emigres to Winnipeg were a few who had originally stopped over in London, some for as long as several years, long enough to imbibe a rudimentary knowledge of organization procedure, and these were they who initiated the uninitiated into modern organizational rite. A few of the Winnipeg Jewish settlers had also come from the country to the south of Canada, that great land of the "joiners," and these, too, made their contribution.

An early entry in the minutes informs us of the purchase of a lot at the corner of Henry and Mary Streets which had been bought by several leaders in the synagogue movement and of the subsequent action taken by the general membership: "Ess verd geposst der mooshen dass zoll in kort gerejestet veren." ("A motion is passed that the parcel of land and its purchase be registered in court.") A Winnipeg barrister was honored with the responsibility of recording the lot purchase in the land-titles office, and Rosh Pina was soon to be a reality. Lawyers, by the way, were plentifully available even in early Winnipeg, causing one journalist of the period to write acridly, "The advent of these legal gentlemen was the commencement of the misery of the people of Winnipeg." It was at this stage in the legal proceedings that the name of Rosh Pina became official. Earlier, the group had willy nilly accepted the informal designation of "Dee Sephardishe Kungregation," but on the advice of their barrister they cast about for a respectable Biblical title and one among them proposed Rosh Pina out of Psalms, and for a personal sentimental reason. The man had originally migrated from Russia to Palestine, had helped to estab-



THE ORIGINAL ROSH PINA

This House of Worship was completed in 1893.

lish the Rosh Pina Colony in the Holy Land but had subsequently emigrated from Zion to Winnipeg. The name, Rosh Pina was unanimously adopted. With a piece of land and a dignified name, the congregation set to planning their structure. But even the birth of a Sephardic congregation, when even all of them were Sephardim, had to be accompanied by pains, for only one month later the minutes indicate that a certain family informed the Rosh Pina officials of their decision to withdraw, reasons not recorded. After discussing the dissidents' notice of withdrawal someone "mooft dee mooshen" and it was "gessekent" and "dissydet" that the family should be awarded fifty dollars, their original contribution, one Scroll and a Ram's Horn, these sacred objects having been deposited also with the infant congregation at an earlier date. A vote was taken and we learn that the motion was "kerret"—carried. In the minutes of future years we find that the same quarrelsome clan stalked in and out of the congregation with their Scroll and their Ram's Horn but Rosh Pina was tolerant of their pécadilloes. But then do not the wise rabbis of old say that every quarrel for the sake of heaven is bound to be resolved?

At the very same meeting it was also determined that any officer absenting himself from a meeting without good cause was to lose his post, "Ess iz geposst dass yeder offisser vos iz ebsen tzu mittings farlirt er zein shtelle." ("It is passed that any officer who is absent from meeting shall lose his post.") Obviously Rosh Pina had no use for the latter-day type of letterhead officials. Moreover, officers carried a heavy personal responsibility for the financial problems of the congregation, for at each of the meetings reports were presented showing

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

the amounts owing to the president and his junta, which they had expended since the last meeting out of their own purses. One president, because he gave of his substance and devotion, saw fit to seek earthly return for his efforts by storing furniture in the back section of the synagogue gallery, normally reserved for the ladies. He was called to task at a meeting by an indignant member and he hastily complied with the censure, removing his "fonitche" from the house of worship.

Until the new synagogue was completed, temporary quarters were established in "Ah holl" and the minutes show that a sexton was engaged from between two applicants who sought the sacred responsibility. We learn that Reb Yeshaye Lerner requested a salary of three dollars per month while Reb Moishe Elitzer sought an honorarium of two dollars. Needless to say, Reb Moishe's bid was favored; he died a poor sexton some thirty years later.

The wheels of organization moved slowly in old Winnipeg and only in January, 1893, was a large general meeting held, at which time a committee was struck off and mandated to proceed with actual construction work, "Ess iz gemooft und gessekent az ah shul zol gebildet veren. Reb Yechiel Bronfman git ah siggeshun az ah kommittee sol appointed veren un ah plan oistruarbeiten, Oich bei ah kontrakter oder a muggitch kompany ess tzu farmuggitchen. Dan zol men bei dee poblik hilf foderren." ("It was moved and seconded that a synagogue be built. Reb Yechiel Bronfman makes the suggestion that a committee be appointed and that a plan be worked out. Furthermore, that it be mortgaged with either the contractor or a mortgage company. Then the public should be approached for assist-

ance.") Whatever funds had already been raised were to be deposited in a bank by three officers to be named and that only they be empowered to withdraw such funds when necessary, "un dee geld drohen fun dee benk nor zay." ("Only they were to make withdrawals from the bank.")

Immediately after the general meeting the special committee convened and decided that a seating plan be formulated so that when the "poblik" was approached they could actually select the seats they wanted to purchase. The seats were to be sold on the basis of four payments, a down payment to be made immediately and the balance due over a three-year period. The prices for pews ranged as follows: East Wall - \$125, East Wall-next-to-the-Ark - \$150. Other seats were sold at \$90, \$50 and \$40. And seats began to move briskly, for shortly after they went on sale bids were requested from two contractors. At a subsequent meeting bids were opened, one contractor bidding at \$2,000 and another at \$1,900. It was then decided by the building committee that "ah rachitekter" (an architect) be engaged to prepare a plan. How contractors could arrive at estimates prior to seeing building plans remains to us a profound mystery. But then, these were Sephardim and their prayer order, too, is different from all other prayer orders.

In the meanwhile current expenses of the congregation were not being covered by income for we read in the minutes of June 25, 1893, "Ess bleibt geposst dee rest geld ven ess felt zo vet Mister Tevel Finkelstein, un Mister Nissel Rosenblat oislyen doss geld biz ershten Oktober oif interess un dee iberige fun dee bilding kommitte zollen industen tzu dee drei." ("It was passed



THE INTERIOR OF OLD ROSH PINA

that the balance of the money, when needed, shall be borrowed from Mister Tevel Finkelstein and Mister Nissel Rosenblat on interest until October 1, and the other members of the building committee shall endorse a note to the aforementioned two.") It is interesting to note that mister, rather than the Yiddish *reb*, was the designation used for the affluent pair of leaders. Also decided on June 25 was that the Holy Ark be constructed by a carpenter with the clear understanding that the congregation be not obliged to accept the Ark if it proved unsatisfactory to them. "Fals er vet nit gefallen bei der kungregayshen vet er nit ektzeptet veren." Finally, members who had not yet paid fully their first installment for their pews shall be informed that their seats had been forfeited as of the next meeting, "ven nit ferleert er zein sit un ess verd geposst doss Mister N. R. zol notifyssen dos zelbe." ("If not he loses his seat and it is passed that Mr. Nissel Rosenblatt shall notify him to the effect.")

On August 24, 1893, the Rosh Pina Synagogue was dedicated. We learn from the minutes that "invitayshens" were sent to all the Jewish residents of Winnipeg and that to insure proper decor and order a policeman was engaged. A special platform was set up for the auspicious occasion and honors were sold: the opening of the synagogue doors, the carrying in of the Scrolls, and placing them in the Holy Ark. In the synagogue lobby was posted, conspicuously, a large sign which read, "Yeder mensh voss kummt Shabbes oder Yonteff davenen muz zich behaven un nit oyston dem tallis biz ende tefillah. Fals immitzer iz hungerig un vil nit bleiben biz ende zol er gehn in poolish zein tallis oyston un zein vunsh erfillen." ("Everyone who comes to shul on Sab-

bath or a Holiday to pray, must behave himself and not take off his prayer shawl until the end of the prayer service. If anyone should become hungry and not wish to remain until the end let him go into the hallway, take his prayer shawl off and proceed to fulfil his wish.") As the membership proceeded through the portals of their new house of worship in July, 1893, they proclaimed jubilantly with the Psalmist, "The stone which the builders have rejected is become the Rosh Pina—the chief corner stone."

As of a month later dues were fixed at twenty-five cents per month. "Dee dues zollen starten fun August 1, 1893." ("The dues shall start from August 1, 1893.") In late winter of the same year the Rosh Pina established within its membership an autonomous "so-sy-te" (society) to look after the needs of the Jewish poor in the city as well as to send funds to the Holy Land. A levy of five cents per month was self-imposed by the membership for these humanitarian purposes. Some short time later a "Bikkur Cholim Society" was formed which in turn evolved a sick-benefit plan. The premium was ten cents a month and in return were offered the benefits of having a member of the Bikkur Cholim Committee stay over with an ill person for nursing attention and also a provision of partial defrayal of doctor's and medicine costs—a veritable Blue Cross plan.

Rosh Pina reached full stature when in February, 1894, a spiritual leader was engaged "tzu ekten als reverend." ("To act as reverend.") After protracted negotiations with a certain Rev. Moishe Shechter, arrangements were arrived at and the functionary was to receive the munificent sum of one hundred and fifty dollars per annum. But, alas, the reverend gentleman

ROSH PINA — EARLY BEGINNINGS

being the progenitor and supporter of a large clan, found the salary inadequate and he petitioned the congregation for a leave of absence for the following summer that he might tour other Jewish communities for the purpose of supplementing his meager income by cantorial concertizing. His petition was approved, nor with great reluctance, for among the Rosh Pina members there were many cantorial aspirants.

After 1894 the minutes of the Rosh Pina reveal a preoccupation, almost exclusive, with pews, dues, enrollment or suspension of members. The congregation was established, the proceedings were routine. Rosh Pina had settled down to a respectable role in the life of the Winnipeg Jewish community.

IX

Montefiore Papers Discovered In Winnipeg

FROM Moses to Moses none has arisen like Moses" has oft been quoted concerning Moses of ancient Israel and Moses Maimonides of the thirteenth century. In the nineteenth century another illustrious Moses arose in Israel, Montefiore of England. In his lifetime which spanned slightly beyond one hundred years Sir Moses Montefiore became a legend among world Jewry. He was revered among his people for his dedication to them and he was singled out by anti-semites as the uncrowned king of the Jews. When, in 1846, Montefiore came to Russia to meet with Czar Nicholas I, hoping to alleviate the oppressed condition of his brethren in that benighted land, he was welcomed by Jews as a redeemer of his people. In Vilna all of the Jewish population numbering some 25,000 crowded the streets to see their champion. Above all they were intrigued and thrilled by the coat-of-arms which adorned the aristocrat's carriage on which was emblazoned the word "Jerusalem." At a world-conclave of anti-semites, appropriately held in Dresden, Germany, it was reported that Montefiore (at that time 98 years of age) had proposed at a rabbinical assembly in Cracow that Jewry dominate the peoples of the world through Jewish capital by gaining control of the world-press. Thus was honored the venerable English Jew by friend and foe alike.

We examine some highlights of Montefiore's legendary career in the light of several letters and notes which

MONTEFIORE'S PAPERS DISCOVERED IN WINNIPEG

we discovered in the Archives of the Manitoba Province. They are presented here in chronological order.

The first item, dated June 28, 1837, is a handwritten note from the Common Cryer of the City of London notifying Moses Montefiore of his election to the office of Sheriff of London. With this note is also the calling card of the Common Cryer, Samuel Beddome Esq. The note is addressed to Montefiore at the Alliance Office which was the Alliance Assurance Company of which Sir Moses was a founder and president. According to the historian, Lucien Wolf, this company had been established by Moses Montefiore and Nathan Mayer Rothschild in 1824 resulting from the refusal of the Guardian Assurance Company to engage Benjamin Gumpertz, a brother-in-law of Montefiore, to the post of actuary because he was a Jew.¹ The note reads as follows:

Mr. Sheriff Elect-Montefiore

The Common Cryer presents his respects to Mr. Montefiore, and he was waited upon him with the official notice of his election to the Office of Sheriff of London — the Common Cryer will call at the Alliance tomorrow to learn whether it has been delivered.

Alliance Office

Wednesday 1 o'clock

28 June 1837

From Montefiore's Diaries² we learn of the attempts to persuade Sir Moses to run for the office of Sheriff. He was approached on this matter on March 20, 1837, by Mr. A. H. Thornborough who informed Montefiore that important members of the Corporation of London

Mr Sheriff Elect-Montefiore

'The Common Cym presents his respects.
to Mr Montefiore and he has waited upon
him with the official notice of his election
to the Office of Sheriff of London. — The Common
Cym will call at the Alliance tomorrow
to learn whether it has been delivered.

Alliance Office

Wednesday 1 o'clock

20. June 1837

WRITTEN MESSAGE

Delivered to Moses Montefiore, informing him of his election to the office of Sheriff.

would like him to stand for the shrievalty at the forthcoming elections. At first Sir Moses appeared uninterested in the honor. He pointed out the handicaps involved in his inability to attend church functions and that furthermore at city banquets he would have to be permitted to bring his own food and utensils because he was a strict observer of the dietary laws. In concluding this entry in his diary Montefiore wrote: "I suppose I shall hear nothing more of the business, but whatever it is, is for the best. Praised be to God above." Over a period of several months Montefiore wavered in this matter but his family and friends finally prevailed upon him to stand for the office. On June 24, 1837, a Mr. Huffman called on Montefiore to inform him that his name had been proposed by Mr. T. A. Curtis, Governor of the Bank of England, the resolution being seconded by Samuel Gurney. Both men had praised Montefiore at a meeting attended by some four hundred London notables.

Montefiore was still not wholly pleased by the honor accorded to him for in the evening of June 24 he wrote in his diary: "I shall have the greatest difficulties to contend with in the execution of my duty; difficulties which I shall meet with at the very outset. The day I enter on my office is the commencement of our New Year (Rosh Hashonah). I shall therefore have to walk to Westminster instead of going in my state carriage, nor I fear, shall I be able to dine with my friends at the inauguration dinner, which, from time immemorial, is given on the 30th of September. I shall, however, endeavour to persuade my colleague to change the day to the fifth of October."

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

According to Dr. L. Loewe, Montefiore's personal secretary, Montefiore's friends commented, saying that other Jews in similar circumstances would adapt themselves accordingly. To which Montefiore firmly replied: "Very well, I will not deviate from the injunctions of my religion; let them call me a bigot if they like; it is immaterial to me what others do or think in this respect. God had given man the free will to act as he may think proper. He has set before him life and death, blessing and curse (Deut. ch. xxx, v. 15). I follow the advice given in Holy Writ, and choose that which be considered life, which is accounted a blessing." Montefiore's fears concerning the Rosh Hashonah conflict were allayed when, on June 25, 1837, he was visited by Thornborough, Lucas and Carrol (the latter being the other newly elected Sheriff) who agreed to postpone the Sheriff's inaugural dinner from September 30 to October 5. Thus on September 28, Montefiore was sworn into office and on October 5 the inaugural dinner took place, the Lord Mayor of London proposing the toast to the two new Sheriffs, Carrol and Montefiore.

To the Lord Mayor's toast Mr. Sheriff Montefiore made the following reply:

"My Lord Mayor, My Lords and gentlemen, if I consulted my own feelings of diffidence on this occasion, I confess I should have remained silent, and have allowed my friend and colleague to return our united thanks for the honor conferred on us by the distinguished company. But as custom demands that I should say a few words, I rise to express briefly, and I fear imperfectly, my feelings of gratitude for the flattering manner in which my health has been proposed, and the warm and affectionate greeting with which it has been received. New to the high and important office I have been called upon by the kind wishes of my fellow-citizens to fill, it will readily be conceived that I cannot be acquainted with all its various

duties. But I can assure you it shall be my study to understand their nature, and my earnest endeavour to fulfil them in such a manner as to justify my fellow-citizens in the choice they have made. Although I cannot pretend to say that I will do what your late Sheriffs have done, still less to surpass them in their efforts to be useful, yet I hope, so far, to imitate their example as to show my anxiety to transmit to my successors the functions of my office unimpaired in their usefulness, and its privileges undiminished in their value. Believing that it is not a political office, and yet that it has duties both to the Queen and to the public, I hope, in the execution of those duties, to swerve neither to the right nor the left, but on the one hand to uphold the rightful prerogatives of the Crown, and on the other to support the just liberties of the people. Called upon by the free, intelligent, and wealthy citizens of this great city to fill so important an office, I trust that I shall never be found wanting in any efforts to prove that the great privilege of electing their own Sheriffs may be safely entrusted to the people. May I add that in choosing the humble individual before you to fill so important an office, they have shown that private character, when based on integrity, will secure public honour and respect. Nor is it less gratifying to find, that though professing a different faith from the majority of my fellow-citizens, yet this has presented no barrier to my desire of being useful to them in a situation to which my forefathers would in vain have aspired; and I hail this as proof that those prejudices are passing away, and will pass away, which prevent our feelings from being as widely social, as just, as comprehensive in their effect as the most amiable and best-instructed mind can desire. Nor can I forget, while alluding to kindly feelings, how much I am indebted to those friends who, unasked and unsolicited, proposed and elected me to office which now gives me the opportunity of addressing you. To them, to you, to the Livery at large, I again tender my thanks, and I beg to assure you that, whatever may be necessary to enhance the high respectability of my office, to support its splendour, to maintain its rights, to add to its honour, and to make it more useful to my fellow-citizens—if it can be made more useful—I will attempt, and with your countenance and support I trust, accomplish. Thus acting, I shall hope to receive the only regard I seek—the thanks of my fellow-citizens, and the approbation of my own conscience."

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

Some time later Montefiore was the recipient of an official gift of three does. When informed of the unique gift, Montefiore despatched a *shochet* to slaughter the three animals and he distributed portions of the rare delicacy among his friends.

Concerning his discharge of shrieval responsibilities Lucien Wolf writes: "The year of office Sir Moses served as sheriff was distinguished by large collections made for the City charities, and by the complete absence of capital punishment. The latter circumstance is a source of great pride to Sir Moses. There was certainly one criminal condemned to death, but with the assistance of a lady highly placed, a reprieve was obtained. Sir Moses, at that period found few to sympathize with him in his humane dislike of the death punishment. His representations on the subject to Lord John Russel were coldly received, and when while showing Marshal Soult over Newgate, he expressed his opinions on the subject to the inflexible disciplinarian, they evoked only an astonished stare."

The second Montefioriana item is a letter dated March 3, 1841, from Hananel de Castro, president of the Deputies of the British Jews in which de Castro extends invitation to Montefiore to attend a meeting of Deputies at de Castro's residence at which time de Castro will "have the honor to present you (Montefiore) with an address from that body on your return from your Eastern Mission." The "Eastern Mission" was the one which concerned the Damascus Affair. The text of the letter reads:

Deputies of British Jews.

Amos Sir,

I have to request the favor of
your company, at a Meeting of the Board of
Deputies of the British Jews, which will be
held, at my residence N^o 19 South Street
Finsbury Square, on Wednesday Evening next,
the 10th Inst. at 7 o'clock precisely; On which
occasion, I shall have the honor to present
you with an address from that body, on your
return from your Eastern Mission.

I remain devotedly Yours.

3 March 1841.

To Sir Moses Montefiore & Co.

M. M. M.
M. M. M.
M. M. M.

LETTER OF INVITATION

Sent to Montefiore by Deputies of British Jews.

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS

Honored Sir,

I have to request the favor of your company, at a meeting of the Board of Deputies of the British Jews, which will be held, at my residence No. 19 South Street Timbury Square, on Wednesday Evening next, the 10th Inst., at 7 o'clock precisely, on which occasion, I shall have the honor to present you with an address from that body, on your return from your Eastern Mission.

I remain devotedly yours,

H. DE CASTRO
President.

3 March 1841

To Sir Moses Montefiore

In April, 1840, European Jewry was shocked by the horrible story that emanated from Damascus where the Jewish community had been charged with the ritual murder of a Capuchin friar, Thomas de Calangiano who, together with his servant, had mysteriously disappeared. In conspiracy with the then French Consul, Count de Ratt-Menton and the Governor of Damascus, Sheriff Pasha, local church authorities set about to make a case against Damascus Jewry. In due course a poor Jewish barber was arrested and through inhuman torture a confession was presumably wrested from him in which he confessed and incriminated several fellow Damascus Jews. The situation grew increasingly worse for the local Jewish community, the authorities stopping at nothing to prove their case. Subsequently riots broke out in Beyrout and Smyrna against the Jews and life became intolerable for Ottoman Jewry generally.

On April 21, 1840, Montefiore convened in London a meeting of the Board of Jewish Deputies and other prominent figures of the community. Resolutions were

passed condemning the unfounded accusations against their fellow Jews of the East and a deputation was named to visit Lord Palmerston, Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Lord Palmerston received the group sympathetically and promised them that the British Government would exert its influence on behalf of Damascus Jewry through their Near Eastern representatives.

In France, Adolph Cremieux put his plea before King Louis Phillippe and was half-heartedly promised attention. In Austria, Metternich sent a personal protest to Mehmet Ali at Alexandria. Mehmet Ali, the Egyptian Viceroy, was at last disturbed by the European repercussions and he quickly instructed the Damascus Sheriff Pasha to stop the disorders, dispatching also troops to re-establish order. And, finally, he set up an Inquiry Commission of the Austrian, English, Prussian and Russian Consuls, to investigate fully the Damascus *cause celebre*. The French authorities, most uneager for the inquiry, protested vehemently to Mehmet Ali against the Inquiry Commission, achieving their desired effect—Mehmet Ali's cancellation of the Commission's appointment.

West European Jewry was aroused anew and Montefiore convened a series of meetings. On June 15, 1840, Montefiore and a delegation were appointed to visit and negotiate directly with Mehmet Ali in Alexandria. Adolph Cremieux was named representative in this mission by French Jewry. For his associate on this important trip Montefiore chose D. W. Wire, earlier his under-sheriff and later Lord Mayor of London, Dr. Madden, a renowned writer, and Dr. L. Loewe, his secretary. Cremieux took as his associate, the eminent Jewish scholar, Dr. Solomon Munk.

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

Bolstering the status of the Jewish mission to Mehmet Ali were important demonstrations which transpired in London, one in the House of Commons and another at Mansion House. Introducing the debate in Parliament was Sir Robert Peel who called upon the government to investigate the Damascus affair "in the interests of general humanity." Continued Peel, "Thus they will be enabled to rescue the great portion of society, the Jews, who in every other country which they live have, by their conduct in private life, conciliated the general estimation and good-will of their fellow-subjects, from a charge which is founded on prejudice, and must subject them to the most grievous injustice." Lord Palmerston, replying, indicated that Colonel Hodges at Alexandria had been instructed to bring the matter to the attention of Mehmet Ali, Pasha of Egypt, and to impress upon him the urgent need for immediate justice. The Mansion House demonstration convened by the Lord Mayor was singularly well-attended by influential Englishmen. The Lord Mayor was empowered to present resolutions condemning the Damascus atrocities to representatives of the various powers and to the British Government.

Accompanied by his associates and Lady Montefiore, Sir Moses set sail on July 7, 1840. In his diary for that day he wrote, "I should think there were more than one hundred Jews waiting to see us set off, all giving us their blessing, and wishing us health, success and a safe return," and the pious Montefiore concludes, "May the Almighty hearken to their prayers, and grant their petition." On July 20 they were joined in Marseilles by M. and Mme. Cremieux.

MONTEFIORE'S PAPERS DISCOVERED IN WINNIPEG

Arriving in Alexandria on August 4, Montefiore immediately visited with Colonel Hodges, requesting an early audience with Mehmet Ali. Two days later Montefiore was received by Mehmet Ali at which time Sir Moses requested that he and the mission be permitted to proceed to Damascus. The Egyptian Pasha promised to consider the petition and additional interviews followed with no decision. It soon became obvious that Mehmet Ali was carrying on dilatory tactics, perhaps because of French intervention through their Alexandrian representative, Cochelet. This became evident through the fact that Cochelet had refused to present Cremieux to Mehmet Ali.

Eventually embarrassed by the pressures of the mission and the foreign consuls who were supporting the mission's petition, the Pasha through an English merchant, Mr. S. Briggs, offered to release the Jewish prisoners still held at Damascus if the mission, in turn, would drop the entire matter. To which Montefiore replied, "The fact is they wish the atrocious transaction to be hushed up, but I will never consent to that."

After some twenty-six days of negotiations the Pasha consented to issue an order of "honorable liberation" for the nine Jewish prisoners of Damascus. By September 6, Mehmet Ali's firman reached Damascus and the nine prisoners were released, and the Jews who had fled in the wake of the persecutions were permitted to return to their families in Damascus.

The third Montefioran item is a letter of four pages, dated May 29, 1841, written by a prominent Englishman, Sir William Hillary, to Montefiore. In this epistle Hillary congratulated Montefiore for his extraordinary

Sole of Mon 24th May 1841

My Dear Sir Moses

Though many years have passed away, and many momentous events have taken place, since I last had the opportunity to recall myself to your recollection, yet in this interval, I assure you, it has afforded me the greatest satisfaction, from time to time, to learn your successful progress in that noble and disinterested cause which you had marked out for yourself, and so indefatigably pursued, though surrounded by much difficulty and danger for the philanthropic purpose of rescuing your own oppressed people from the most barbarous and unmerited persecution which ever took place in any land, and most sincerely do I congratulate you on your safe return from the Holy Land after the accomplishment of ^{the objects} the achievement of which must be attended with the most gratifying feelings and recollections, to the latest hour of your life I find too that Lady Montefiore has been quite a heroine on the occasion and partaker of all your difficulties and dangers -

A PORTION OF LETTER

Written by Sir William Hillary to Montefiore.

MONTEFIORE'S PAPERS DISCOVERED IN WINNIPEG

effort on behalf of his appressed brethren. Hillary writes further that he is sending to Montefiore articles which he has written for the press in which he (Hillary) puts forth the proposal that Palestine be delivered from "the grasp of the infidel." Thus Palestine might again become a prosperous and happy land with freedom to all religious groups. Hillary's letter follows:

Isle of Man 29th May 1841

My Dear Sir Moses

Though many years have passed away, and many momentous events have taken place, since I last had the opportunity to recall myself to your recollection, yet in this interval, I assure you, it has afforded me the greatest satisfaction from time to time to learn your successful progress in that noble and benevolent course which you had marked out for yourself, and so indefatigably pursued, though full of many a difficulty and danger for the philanthropic purpose of rescuing your own oppressed people from the most barbarous and unmeritted persecution which every took place in any land, and most sincerely do I congratulate you on your safe return from the Holy Land after the accomplishment of objects, the achievement of which must be attended with most gratifying feelings and recollections, to the latest hour of your life. I find too that Lady Montefiore has been quite a heroine in the occasion and partaken of all your difficulties and dangers.

Since the extraordinary changes which the few last years have produced in the affairs of the East, and especially in Palestine, my attention has been forcibly directed to the Sacred Country, and it has appeared to me that the time was now come, when it might be delivered out of the grasp of the infidel, and become a prosperous and a happy land, and under these impressions I first wrote my ideas on the subject to some of my co-adjutors of the Order of St. Johns of Jerusalem, of which I am a Knight, and a member of the Council of British Langue, and by their desire I was induced to commit it to the press, copies of which I now send for your perusal, and such of your friends whom you think it may interest.

By our Branch it was immediately transmitted to the continental Langues, and by them translated into French and Ger-

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

man, and published in those countries—I also felt it my duty to submit it to the consideration of Her Majesty's Ministers, Lord Palmerston, the Duke of Wellington and others of different parties have done me the honor to thank me for the communication and having thus given the project publicity, I must now wait the impression it may make on those who have the power to give it effect.

I know not how far the views I have taken may meet your approbation, but I trust they are divested of all intolerant and narrow minded policy, securing to all, their Rites, their Religion and their privileges, as citizens of a free and an independent state—And I trust that the sentiments of the present Order of St. John, will be found to be sufficiently in accordance with the times, to render them worthy of the trust which I propose to be placed in them—Though fallen in fortune by the events of the French Revolution, and scattered and broken, since their expulsion from Malta, the Order was no more extinguished by that catastrophe than it previously was by the loss of St. John of Aire, or of Rhodes—and more recently it has begun to rally, and recover from the shock it sustained—Many illustrious crowned heads have become members of the Order, and the Emperor of Austria has restored to it, all the forfeited commanderies in his Dominions, and received its Knights at his court on his coronation in Milan.

My intercourse with this Order commenced so far back as the year 1797 when I visited Malta and being introduced to the Last Grand Master Hornpeck, I became his guest at the Ztes at his inauguration, my letters to this Prince being from the Duke of Sussex (then Prince Augustus Frederick) to whose household I still belong, and also from Sir Wm. Hamilton the then English Minister at Naples, I received the greatest friendship during my stay, and was instructed with a mission of a secret and important nature between the Order and the British Government—From this period I have continued to feel the warmest attachment and of which as I have before said, I became on the revival of the English Langue, a zealous member.

I shall feel gratified should my views and projects meet with your approbation, and it will afford me much pleasure to be favored with your sentiments on a subject upon which, from your experience and many opportunities of judging, few persons could give more valuable hints.

MONTEFIORE'S PAPERS DISCOVERED IN WINNIPEG

Lady Hillary begs to join me in kindest regards to Lady Montefiore and yourself — We hope neither of you have suffered from the fatigues you have undergone and believe me
My Dear Sir Moses

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. HILLARY.

To Sir Moses Montefiore.

Sir William Hillary was one among other leading Englishmen who in the middle of the nineteenth century were enthusiastic about the idea of restoring Palestine to the Jews. Among others were Lord Palmerston, referred to in Hillary's letter, and Lord Shaftesbury.

Unfortunately we do not possess Montefiore's reply to the Hillary letter. However, we can surmise from Montefiore's general approach to the Palestine question that he politely thanked Hillary for his sincere interest in the Jewish cause but that his proposals were not quite feasible or practicable. Traditional Jew that he was, Montefiore believed in the ultimate Messianic deliverance of the Holy Land. In the meanwhile he was primarily concerned with the amelioration of the sad lot of those pious but poverty-stricken Jews who resided in Palestine. How to make them self-sufficient was of foremost concern to him.

When approached by Colonel Churchill, an English officer in the Middle East, with the suggestion that European Jewry attempt to re-establish a Jewish state in Palestine, Montefiore replied appreciatively but was obviously unenthusiastic. Instead he offered Churchill funds for assistance to Jews by helping them to establish small industries and by the creation of a free dispensary in Jerusalem.

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

Yet, in fairness to Montefiore, it should be said that he was motivated by *Chibat Tzion*; witness his seven pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the first when he was forty-three and the final one at the age of ninety-one. One has but to examine the record of his munificences to a host of Palestinian projects including hospitals, yeshivot, agricultural settlements, a printing press and housing projects.³ Unfortunately he had based his approach to Jewish problems upon a strong faith in *shtadlanut*, which was tinged with naivete and unwarranted optimism. But his deeds of over one half century, particularly on behalf of Palestine, contained within them the seeds for the flowering of Zionism. The first international conference of the Choveve Tzion which met at Kattowitz in 1884 on the occasion of Montefiore's one hundredth birthday, was symbolic of the beginning of the fulfillment of the hopes of the old Sir Moses.⁴ Very late in his long life he ventured to observe: "I do not expect that all Israelites will quit their abodes in those territories in which they feel happy, even as there are Englishmen in Hungary, Germany, America and Japan; but Palestine must belong to the Jews, and Jerusalem is destined to become the seat of a Jewish commonwealth."

X

American Jewish Life as Seen Through "Hamelitz"

TO THE STUDENT of Jewish life in America during the immigration period following 1882 the Russian-Hebrew publication "Hamelitz" offers excellent source material. In this Hebrew newspaper, which had a wide readership in East Europe, the researcher into the American-Jewish past discovers not only factual reportage but also the picture that was contrived for Jews back in the "old country." Through "Hamelitz" columns Russian, Polish, Lithuanian and Rumanian Jews often gained their first knowledge about the character and quality of Jewish life in the "golden land" where they dreamed to be some day. Not that the reportage was necessarily favorably slanted in its evaluation of the American-Jewish scene. Quite to the contrary, a rather dismal picture was conjured up in the mind of the European reader. In the realm of religion, the portrayal was one of chaotic break-down of traditions known in East Europe. Concerning colonization which had had considerable appeal in "Am Olam" circles, the reader learned of heart-breaking failures in the various agricultural ventures across the United States. Insofar as inter-relationships with non-Jews was concerned, there was offered only the bleak side of the story: anti-semitism was presumably rampant, not necessarily pogroms, but anti-semitism nevertheless.

It would be interesting to know who the American correspondents of the "Hamelitz" were. Undoubtedly,

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

their bias arising from personal bitter experience colored, in large part, their reports. We suspect that most frequently they were the unfortunate "melamdim" whose calling was thoroughly unappreciated and completely without legitimate status in American communities. We surmise, too, that while they were not necessarily all of them traditionalists in matters religious, their conception of religious Judaism was that form which was known to them in "der alter heim." Any departure of the American type was cause for alarm and only indication of assimilation.

A brief comment should be made concerning the Publisher-Editor of the "Hamelitz" from its inception in 1860. An unusually dynamic personality, Alexander Cederbaum, was an auto-didact who never properly mastered the three languages in which he wrote and through which he pioneered three separate publications in Russia: the "Hamelitz" in Hebrew, the "Kol Mevasseyr" in Yiddish and the "Rasvyet" in Russian. He was a "shtadlan" second to none, sincerely and selflessly dedicated to the weal of Russian Jewry. It is interesting to note that while his American correspondents decried the acculturation process that was taking place in the United States, Cederbaum himself advocated "enlightenment" among his fellow Jews, criticizing bitterly the Hassidism of his day as obscurantist, urging Jews to master the Russian language and, in general, to become conversant in the ways of the world.

Returning, then, to a consideration of the reporting of "Hamelitz," we have done a sampling of a bound volume which we found in Winnipeg's Jewish Public Library. It covers a one-half year period from January 2 to June 28, 1890.

From the "Hamelitz" point of view we would gather that the following issues loomed large on the American Jewish horizon: Kashruth, Reform Judaism, Hebrew vs. Yiddish, Colonization and Anti-Semitism.

I.

Kashruth was a seemingly insuperable problem. Its religious implications were those of a discipline and required therefore authoritative enforcement from above and an unqualified acceptance from below. In Europe the rabbinic bodies represented that authority and there was control. In American Jewish communities there was never a unified orthodox authority. If one rabbi did not meet and please the whims and fancies of rugged lay individuals another rabbi could always be sought out and brought in to fill the breach. Kashruth was hardly workable under these circumstances.

Let us take the instance of Baltimore, reported in "Hamelitz" of May 1, 1890. Butchers, according to this correspondent, had always figured heavily in communal controversies and although the American clime was reputed to endow men with wisdom ("Avira De-Amerika Machkim") it had nowise affected the thinking patterns of butchers. These men created violent quarrels in all communities. Why? Because they were a law unto themselves, responsible to no one, refusing to accept rabbinic supervision as they should have, according to Jewish law. Anyone could set himself up as a dealer in Kosher meat though he had not the slightest familiarity with Kashruth regulations. Moreover, a simple *melamed* who knew not even casually the codes governing Kashruth could, on arrival in free America,

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

buy a black frock coat, don a top hat, grow a beard and buy a slaughtering knife and announce himself a *shochet*. He could then proceed from house to house and slaughter poultry, no one questioning him as to his background, no one examining his qualifications. On occasion two and three *shochetim* might chance upon each other in a single dwelling and a melee would ensue.

And while the situation was foul among poultry slaughterers, it was manifestly worse in the cattle department. The abattoir owners held absolute control over their *shochetim*. They hired as they saw fit and they fired at whim. "The *shochetim*," writes the "Hamelitz" correspondent, "become mere employees and are to be likened unto clay in the potter's hands." Rabbinic supervision was unheard of and because *shochetim* were all too plentiful the wholesale meat dealers frequently extorted sums for "jobs" available.

When the *shochetim* of Baltimore brought their complaints before the leading rabbi they were disgruntled by his helplessness in the face of their problems. Angered by his inability to act forcefully they abused the unfortunate clergyman. The rabbi's wife, a true woman of valor, drove the men from her home ranting at them with a pot in one hand and a pan in the other. In turn charges were lodged against the woman by the offended men before a "squire," but the gentile official chastised the *shochetim* for their disrespectful demeanor towards a man of the cloth.

The "Hamelitz" correspondent offers his personal solution to the problem of Kashruth. "My own opinion is that the honest *shochetim* of Baltimore should put their case before the Jewish masses through the medium of the 'jargon' newspapers, the 'Yiddische Gazet' and

the 'Yiddishe Tzeitung.' Let them expose the charlatans among the meat dealers and let them appeal in particular to Jewish women at large not to allow their chickens to be slaughtered by unknown and unqualified *shochetim*. Perhaps the Daughters of Israel will prove to be the real stalwarts in the campaign for decency and honesty in Kashruth matters. Only then will injustice cease in the land!" But like the prophets of old who thundered similarly and futilely against "injustice in the land" our correspondent's hope remained but a pious dream. In Baltimore as well as in innumerable other American Jewish communities things were not so kosher.

Another instance of Kashruth scandal is reported by the New York correspondent of "Hamelitz" under the dateline of May 30, 1890, as having occurred in Allentown, Pennsylvania. In this Pennsylvania city a Jewish butcher was arrested in mid-May for having operated a shop without city license. When brought to trial he was fined seventy dollars. Of this amount, twenty-five dollars was turned over by the city authorities to the informer who had revealed the misdemeanor to the police. The informer was a Jew.

The prosecuted butcher, apparently angered, and also "educated" suddenly in the ways of informers, acting in "Chad Gadyah" style, himself turned accuser of seven fellow Jewish butchers in the community who were haled into court and fined. Rightfully alarmed and made indignant by the man's unjust behavior the lay and spiritual leaders of Allentown gathered in a synagogue and there excommunicated the wayward butcher. The *shochet* was forbidden to slaughter fowl or cattle for the delinquent and other butchers were to have no dealings with him. His children were expelled from

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

Hebrew School and his wife was disallowed the use of the community *mikveh*.

Little wonder then that many Jews came to look with disfavor upon the unwholesome situation that prevailed. In time the disfavor turned into cynicism with many and ultimately into complete indifference. True there were external environmental factors which militated against the continuing institution of Kashruth but in very good part the internal Jewish conditions drove many from Kashruth observance. It is interesting to note that many devout European Jews who consulted their rabbis as to whether they should migrate to America were frequently dissuaded with the argument that America was a *trefah* land. "The very stones of the country are unkosher," ran the refrain.

II.

Baron de Hirsch of Paris dreamt an idyllic dream that some day large numbers of Jews would return to the soil and become an agricultural people. This dream was partially motivated by the naive notion that anti-semitism would be alleviated in proportion to the number of Jews who would leave urban centres for rural areas where they would strike roots in the earth and become a productive factor in the economy of the land, the assumption being that urban, middle-class occupations were unproductive. Nor did the kindly Baron's dream remain in the dream realm. Baron de Hirsch invested millions

AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE AS SEEN THROUGH "HAMELITZ"

of dollars in projects which were attempted from Canada to the United States to the Argentine.

Intimations and signs of failure of the various agricultural experiments are found in "Hamelitz" of 1890. Reports from New York as well as reports from western points such as Kansas and as far west as Colorado indicated that the farm projects were doomed to failure. The masses who were presumably to be converted into agriculturists were not truly farm oriented, neither psychically nor physically, while the administrators of the sundry projects were obviously unequipped to cope with the experiments. With the leadership group it was a case of ignorance or innocence of agriculture and all its ramifications and it was simultaneously a case of "Deutsche Yahudin" as the philanthropists and the "Ost Juden" as the recipients, neither group understanding the other.

Paying full tribute to Baron de Hirsch's generosity the "Hamelitz" of May 21, 1890, goes on to summarize events that transpired after the Russian exodus that had begun in 1881-82. While admitting that it was German Jewish philanthropy in the United States which made possible immigrant rescue work, the correspondent, writing from Denver, Colorado, criticizes sharply "the slave-masters" who were completely lacking in understanding of the newcomers and their complex problems. The "Hamelitz" correspondent writes with great indignation that the administrators "dealt with the East European immigrants very much in the manner which southern Negro slaves were treated by their masters." Of all in the philanthropic circle but one had a genuine sympathy for the immigrant newcomers, Michael

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

Heilprin, "the wise and sainted." His voice, however, remained "a voice in the wilderness."

And with all the effort and funds that were expended what was achieved? Three farm settlements were attempted: Sicily Island (Louisiana), Alliance (New Jersey) and Beer Sheba (Kansas). Each of the three projects proved failures. In the Mississippi project the land proved poor and the environment malarial. In the Alliance experiment the land was also unproductive. Presumably one hundred and fifty thousand dollars were spent on the Alliance enterprise, this amount according to the administrators, but "whose word one can doubt without necessarily being labelled an *Epikores*." But the Beer Sheba venture in Kansas, according to the "Hamelitz" correspondent, was by far the worst failure. "This settlement was established by Mr. S., an honorable gentleman who now dwells at Sing Sing Prison serving at hard labor for misuse of funds." Our correspondent arrives at the target of his tirade. He now reads in the press that the Baron de Hirsch Fund administrators are discussing the possible establishment of "an institution of higher learning." The school would enable Jewish students to study law and medicine. The "Hamelitz" writer is infuriated. Surely this is a mockery when we are a people already possessed of too many learned among us. Will our immigrants find succor in the fact that a few young Jews will achieve their doctorates? And are there not enough schools of higher learning in the U.S. where those who wish to study may study? Rather the Hirsch funds must be used for further agricultural undertakings and for the training of Jewish youth in basic trades that "poor children can master an

AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE AS SEEN THROUGH "HAMELITZ"

honest trade so that they will not be forced to take unproductive jobs such as selling matches and newspapers on city streets or to shine shoes."

In this colonization problem, as earlier in the Kashruth area, the "Hamelitz" correspondent (though not the same individual) challenges the "East European Jews" to convene mass meetings in all cities, to discuss the problems at hand and to become vocal in their complaints directly to the munificent Baron himself who "in his kindness and mercy will lend a willing ear to our implorings."

In the May 25, 1890, issue of "Hamelitz" a letter received from a Jewish farmer, who had been of the Beer Sheba Settlement in Kansas, is reproduced. It reads:

Lag B'Omer
Arbor County, Kansas

To the Editor:

It is no secret that there were here, more than one hundred and fifty Jewish families and undoubtedly you who are concerned about communal matters will want to know why they left. I can assure you that it was not because of cowardice that they failed. They worked hard to achieve their original purpose but in Kansas generally, and in Arbor County in particular the sun burns mercilessly and the rains are inadequate. The land is virgin prairie and therefore unyielding. Even the English and German settlers left and only the cattle-raisers have stayed on because cattle enterprise can succeed in this region. The grass is good for pasture, water is found everywhere, winters are short and therefore one can easily stock silage for the winter.

And I, who had little money at the outset wherewith to purchase cattle, have struggled together with my sons for five years and thanks to God's beneficence, we have been able to build up a good herd from which we derive a livelihood. This year for the first time we are selling bulls at a profit and I am

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

hopeful that henceforth and further we will be able to do so each year with increasing volume. I hope that from today and onward we will be able to lead a good life and that we will be able to bless the Lord, saying, "I have come into my inheritance and into my peace."

Respectfully,

Z. H. SKLAR

It is interesting to note that while Mr. Sklar's letter is brought as *prima facie* evidence to prove that the agricultural projects were ill-conceived, Mr. Sklar, himself, together with his family made an interesting adjustment to the environment of Kansas. If farming was not worthwhile then cattle-raising was and he stuck it through to success. If we may conjecture, could not perhaps the larger portion of one hundred and fifty families have similarly readjusted themselves? Can one therefore, as does the "Hamelitz" correspondent, wholly and completely blame German-Jewish administrators for the various failures? Colonization was obviously not for an originally urban laboring and mercantile population. Inept administration merely hastened the demise of Jewish settlements.

III.

Reform Judaism to East European Jewry, religious and irreligious alike, was anathema. It represented an out-and-out invitation to church worship and church procedure. Very likely "Hamelitz" correspondents helped to interpret or misinterpret Reform Judaism to their European readers. Thus there was reinforced from America the already prevalent stereotype of the "Reform Temple" and the "Reform Rabbiner." Little effort was

AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE AS SEEN THROUGH "HAMELITZ"

made by the "Hamelitz" writers to present objectively the Reform phenomenon, its basis for development, its character, its goals, its philosophy. Furthermore, the "Hamelitz" correspondent failed to differentiate between the varying outlooks and philosophies of the respective rabbinic leaders. We know for a fact that there were the radical reformers and the conservative reformers. A study of the careers of the individual men mentioned in "Hamelitz" correspondence quickly reveals men of traditional inclination and men of not so traditional an approach. Obviously the correspondent brought with him his strong bias as he observed and reported modern synagogue and modern rabbinic doings.

Thus we read a fully detailed story of a rabbinic conclave (likely the Jewish Board of Ministers which included rabbis of many shades of opinion) held in New York on May 27, 1890.

After Mincha Service (hardly Reform ritual) the meeting was convened, Dr. Alexander Kohut of Congregation Ahavas Chesed giving the opening address. Dr. Kohut compared himself to Rabbi Abba who when he removed from Babylonia to Palestine found that in the Holy Land Jews were at variance on many religious questions with Jews of Babylonia. Similarly did Dr. Kohut find on arrival in America that many ideas held in the United States differed from ideas prevalent among Hungarian Jewry. He had come to revise his original views in favor of the American views which he now accepted fully and whole-heartedly. The American rabbinate must raise the level of Judaism and it is conceivable that a new Jerusalem and a new Zion may come into being in this land. Dr. Kohut would propose that a

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

journal be established immediately through which Torah could be conveyed to large numbers of Jews.

Dr. Kohut was followed by Dr. Gustave Gottheil, chairman of the rabbinic organization. Dr. Gottheil reviewed the achievements of the year gone by. Six additional rabbis had joined the association. A prize of two hundred and fifty dollars was to be awarded to the author of an original theological work. A second prize of two hundred dollars was to be awarded for the winning paper written on the subject of educating young men for the rabbinate. This second prize, Dr. Gottheil assured the members, was not intended as a criticism of the Cincinnati rabbinic seminary (Hebrew Union College) of Dr. Wise nor the New York seminary (Jewish Theological Seminary) of Dr. Morais.

The "Hamelitz" correspondent reports that twenty-two rabbis attended this conference, most of them from New York, a few from outside New York. He goes on to explain that frequently in the larger temples of New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati and Chicago, two rabbis serve a single congregation, an older man who had come from Germany and an associate who had studied in the United States. The rabbis preach on Sabbath and Sunday mornings. Sarcastically the correspondent comments that it is a considerable load for a single rabbi to preach two sermons within one week. However, he returns to the actual explanation for two rabbis within a congregation. The American-born generation of Jews have no appreciation whatsoever for the German sermonics of the European rabbis. On the other hand the American trained rabbi speaks the native language and the congregants are not embarrassed by the presence of visiting

gentile newspapermen who come to "cover" the sermons for their respective publications.

At the close of the afternoon session, Rabbi Jacobs of New York reported with satisfaction that the quarrel which had occurred between Dr. S. Schlesinger of Albany and Dr. Sola-Mendes of New York had been resolved most satisfactorily, Dr. Schlesinger having retracted the unkind comments which he had made about Dr. Mendes at the last rabbinic conclave. The quarrel had broken out as a result of Dr. Schlesinger's anger at not having been called upon to read a paper which Dr. Mendes (as secretary) had asked the Albany rabbi to prepare for the conference. Thanks to Dr. Gottheil's intervention Rabbi Schlesinger apologized and Dr. Mendes was appeased. The "Hamelitz" writer expresses his personal pleasure with this achievement. For who knows what catastrophe might have ensued if peace had not come about. The very trees of Central Park would have been uprooted by the fury of rabbinic anger, the beauty and splendor of New York would have been utterly marred. Nay, more! The majestic Hudson River would have been diverted from its normal course. The correspondent concludes with the pious thought that every "Hamelitz" reader will be equally grateful to learn of the restoration of peace in American rabbinical ranks.

The "Hamelitz" report devotes attention to the evening session of May 27, 1890. The main address, "Concerning the Reasons for the Revived Hatred of Christians Towards Jews," was delivered by Dr. Marcus Jastrow of Philadelphia. The Philadelphia rabbi proposed that the hatred of Jews was no longer rooted in religious animus, for in this enlightened era religious

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

fanaticism had weakened considerably. One observed that anti-Jewish feeling persists among men of little religious faith. Apparently anti-semitism is a social phenomenon. It is surely not based on the fact that we cannot share food in common with them, nor is it because we avoid inter-marriage that they dislike us, for even if we did away with our dietary limitations, and even if we chose to inter-marry freely, even then we would be looked upon as outsiders. Actually, one of the reasons that non-Jews dislike us is that there are some so-called enlightened Jews who flaunt that which is sacred in our religion. Dr. Delitzsch had said that it is the irresponsible and cavalier attitude of some teachers and clergy who make light of the customs and sancta of other religions which brings on a hatred among various religious groups. "We, as ministers of the Jewish religion and its teachers must therefore heal this breach and eliminate this awful plague from among us. We must reaffirm our faith in Judaism, we must return to an observance of the Sabbath and fulfill once more the commandments of our religion."

Following Dr. Jastrow's address, Dr. Joseph Silverman, associate to Dr. Gottheil, made proposals whereby increase in attendance at synagogues and temples might be achieved. The "Hamelitz" correspondent was confident that the proposals made by Dr. Silverman would go unheeded. For after all, how can our generation which believes itself to be the cleverest among men yet be persuaded that the Sabbath is a worthy institution even in an enlightened age?

On June 5, 1890, the New York correspondent of "Hamelitz" dealt with a timely topic—"Confirmation in Reform Congregations." Shevuot, confirmation time,

had just been observed. The writer pointed out that confirmation was still a very controversial subject and since all others made their opinion known, pro and con, he too would step into the arena. He was confident that this temple innovation would become increasingly widespread for the following reasons in particular: Firstly, it was the vogue, and who could resist the style of the times? Secondly, it was becoming a lucrative field for rabbis and teachers who were being amply remunerated for their tutorial efforts by the affluent parents. He quotes a third reason, cited by the "Jewish Messenger": Confirmation would grow in popularity because merchants were beginning to find the custom an excellent stimulus to business. Families and friends of confirmands were buying gifts for the young celebrants. Naturally therefore anything that can be a source of blessing to Jews will be encouraged.

As the "Hamelitz" correspondent studied the names of the confirmands, he was singularly impressed by the names of the youngsters. Among the Temple Emanuel boy confirmands were: Myron, Walter, Perry, William, Henry, Frederick, Arthur, Edwin, Harry, Irving, James, Monroe, etc. Among the girls' names were: Julia, Mabel, Blanche, Estelle, Valeria, Aida, Alice, Nettie, Adele, etc. The "Hamelitz" writer hastened to point out that historically speaking Jews frequently in olden times adopted Aramaic, Egyptian, Greek and Roman names. But then in America where gentiles had no hesitation in choosing Biblical names for their children, why should Jews so studiously avoid them? If Reform Jews were so eager to imitate the non-Jews in so many other ways, then surely here was one positive way of emulating them. But the correspondent begged forgiveness for overlook-

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

ing one confirmand's name at Temple Beth-El—*Beulah* Einstein. But then the parents of that poor girl must have been unaware of its Biblical meaning and origin.

IV.

The New York correspondent of "Hamelitz" writes with much bitterness about the dread disease of anti-semitism which plagues even America, the land of religious and political freedom. He indicated that hotels at summer resorts refuse to accept Jewish clientele. Some hotel owners take the trouble to protest their religious tolerance but cannot accept reservations from Jews because gentile guests will not stay in hotels where Jews are tolerated. Moreover, gentile clubs refrain from inviting Jews to join, even Jews of outstanding stature such as Benjamin Peixotto who was U.S. Consul-General to Rumania or Oscar Strauss who was U.S. Ambassador to Turkey. The two leading German singing organizations in New York, Arion and the Liederkrantz, whose purpose it is to drink beer and entertain their comrades with folk-songs, proudly assert that no Jew has as yet nor will a Jew in the future be allowed to join their organizations. "Imagine, dear reader," writes the correspondent, "if Meyerbeer or Felix Mendelssohn or Halevi or Offenbach wanted to enter the portals of either organization, they would be tossed out because of their religion!"

The correspondent then relates the story of the investigation proceedings being carried on by a U.S. Congressional Committee on Immigration which was taking testimony from the leaders of major organizations including labor unions and ethnic organizations,

concerning future immigration into the United States. In Chicago such hearings were held and Irish representatives praised immigrants who came from the Emerald Isle, Scandinavian leaders praised their immigrant group, etc. The German publisher of the "Illinois Staatszeitung," Herman Rosster, took the trouble to praise German immigrants to the skies while simultaneously damning Jewish immigrants as the lowliest and worst among immigrant material for the country. He urged the Congressional Committee to refuse further admission to Jewish immigrants into the United States. The day after Rosster testified, two Chicago Jewish representatives offered their testimony; they were caustic in their comments. Said Emanuel Beckerman, a native of Warsaw, "The Germans are but hyphenated Americans. They have brought with them Bismarck's autocratic methods. Furthermore, if all the Chicago saloons were placed one next to the other, it would be found that they make up twenty-four miles in length. And who owns these saloons? Germans! Not a Jew is to be found among them." Beckerman was unfortunately contradicted by the next Jew who testified, Moses Barnett. Barnett admitted that he was a saloon-owner. He, however, was critical of the Catholics. They are disloyal as American citizens, he charged, for they swear fealty to the papal flag. He therefore proposed that no Catholic be allowed naturalization until he disclaimed loyalty to the Pope. Dr. Kadison, a Jewish physician, originally from Kovno, testified that immigrants of Eastern Europe are of good quality. They are most eager to have their children enrolled in the public schools so as to grow into good American citizens. The correspondent concludes his report saying that the Congressional Com-

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

mittee would next take testimony in St. Louis, and who would dare to imagine what anti-semitic statements would be forthcoming there, in a city which was a real German stronghold?

In a subsequent issue of the "Hamelitz," the writer continues a survey of the Germans' attitude towards Jews in the United States. He writes particularly of the powerful "New Yorker Staatszeitung" which hammered away at the theme that Jewish immigrants in New York were dragging down the standards of living of the general populace. They crowded into tenement areas, lived in a substandard fashion, and were therefore able to compete in the labor market for lower wages, thus undermining the status of other workers. To bolster their case, the "Staatszeitung" took the trouble to interview the leading New York rabbis.

First to be interviewed was Dr. Kaufmann Kohler, a scholarly and liberal rabbi of New York City. Dr. Kohler indicated that he had thought much on the matter of the Russian-Jewish immigrant. Actually, the Russian Jew was basically capable of virtuous ways. Unfortunately, because of vitiating environmental factors, he was uncouth and uncultured. He hastened to point out, however, that the children of such Russian Jews, reared and educated in America, could grow into fine, upstanding citizens, as good as the children of other ethnic groups in the United States. Dr. Kohler disagreed most emphatically therefore with the contentions of Hermann Rosster before the Congressional Committee in its Chicago hearings. But, continued Dr. Kohler, he was fearful of the consequences which would develop if the Russian Jewish immigrants were allowed

to concentrate in extra-large numbers in the large cities, and particularly in New York. As it was, too many poor Jewish store-keepers and butchers were to be found already in the city. Russian Jewish immigrants should be funnelled off into many areas across the land. They should by no means be allowed to reconstitute themselves into new Warsaw and Berditchev ghettos. If they could be deployed into many American communities, and into a variety of callings they would prove an asset to the country. In conclusion, Dr. Kohler estimated that Russian Jewish immigrants to date number no more than about twenty to thirty thousand, nor would their number increase disproportionately in the years ahead.

Next, reports the "Hamelitz" correspondent, the "Staatzeitung" reporter visited the home of Rabbi Dr. Gustave Gottheil whom he found to be away from home. Instead he interviewed his son, Prof. Richard Gottheil, who expressed the opinion that the increased Russian Jewish immigration was of temporary nature but that soon it would taper off to a modest trickle. Prof. Gottheil felt that the larger number now arriving had been stimulated by the mistaken impression that Baron de Hirsch was prepared to extend his benefaction to care for all Russian Jews who chose to migrate to America. Undoubtedly those Jewish immigrants who had already reached the U.S. would quickly disabuse their brethren at home of such a glamorous notion. However, Prof. Gottheil went on to express the opinion that young Russian Jews who were educable and willing to adapt themselves to American ways, should surely be given the opportunity to settle in this country. But, like Dr. Kohler, Prof. Gottheil cautioned against a heavy con-

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MANITOBA

centration of Russian Jews in the major cities. They would do neither themselves nor the community-at-large a service by such resettlement.

Dr. Alexander Kohut was interviewed next. He opined that it was natural to find among the large mass of immigrants some dross, much as one finds dross in a large quantity of pure gold. But to get the gold one must accept also the dross. America was surely large enough in space to be able to receive three to four million Jews and to absorb them with comparative ease. It was quite possible that America might have to wait until the second generation, born of these immigrants, would take their rightful role in the American scene, but surely the country could afford to wait for such a development. If the immigrants could not find their proper place in the large centers then certainly they could find their niches in the West and South-West of the United States. They would prove real assets in such underdeveloped areas. They might turn to farming, they might engage in trades. Dr. Kohut was opposed to disorganized immigration. Immigrants had to be guided or they might add to the already extensive poverty of a large city. The Baron Hirsch administrators ought immediately to publish, in Yiddish ("Jargon") and in other languages familiar to Russian Jewry, pamphlets wherein they caution potential immigrants to the effect that the Baron Hirsch funds are not available to all Jews, nor that the funds which are expended bring immediate idyllic redemption to those who are beneficiaries. Perhaps such warning would check a mass invasion by Russian Jews into the United States.

Dr. Joseph Krauskopf was interviewed and he concurred with the views expressed by his colleagues. He

added, however, that there was the erroneous reaction abroad that Jewish immigrants from Rumania were Russian Jews. The notion should be clarified since Russian Jews are head and shoulders above Rumanian Jews in intellect and manners! Krauskopf, too, believed that the newspapers were exaggerating the size of the immigration. He agreed that there was great danger in heavy settlements of Jews in the large cities.

The issue of immigration continued to loom large in the columns of the "Staatszeitung" and the "Hamelitz" carries forward the reports into yet another issue. The headline in the German newspaper read: "The Arrival of European Jews in Huge Numbers." The "Staatszeitung" expresses mystification at the fact that while Americans generally and even American Jews admit the need for limiting immigration no action was being taken to enforce such limitation. There is, after all, a great difference between East European and West European Jews. Every encyclopedia makes this differentiation. It is a natural difference, for the Jews of East Europe are not pure Semites, they possess mixed blood. Nor would the American environment influence such immigrants for the good because they sequester themselves in their own sections in the large cities. And yet while all this is so obvious, American Jews will not take action and they suspect those who demand action of anti-semitism. This in spite of the fact that they differentiate themselves from East European Jewry. Perhaps they think that these immigrants will eventually assimilate into the American population. But this is a false hope as has been proven by the experience of Jews in East European lands where instead of Jews assimilating

into the gentile population, quite the opposite has occurred!

Any man who is open-minded and looks at what is developing in the city of New York, must perforce admit that the large influx of East European Jews has given rise to a great increase in anti-semitism. But American Jews choose to deny this. They contend that those who argue thusly are themselves anti-semites. These stubborn people fail to see that they jeopardize their very future. It has been repeatedly said by the "Staatszeitung" that American Jews can by their own efforts stem the flood-tide of immigration if only they refrain from supporting and encouraging it.

How the exact solutions to the dilemma can be arrived at the "Staatszeitung" admits it does not know. The American Jews must themselves propose a solution. The respected rabbis of New York who in essence appear to agree with the newspaper's concern should come forward with definite suggestions, and others will follow.

The "Hamelitz" correspondent is mystified by the German newspaper's references to Jewish intermingling in East Europe. Do they mean an intermingling with the Tartars or do they perhaps mean the Kuzarim? Whatever the case, their anti-Jewish sentiment has completely upset their thinking processes and they are befuddled.

To offset the negative attitude of the "Staatszeitung," the "New York Sun," reports the Hebrew writer, took a very favorable stand towards Jewish immigration. The "Sun" cites the outstanding record of Jewish students, and in particular children of Russian

AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE AS SEEN THROUGH "HAMELITZ"

Jewish parentage, which was released by the school authorities that very week in June, 1890. Why such excellence in studies? Because among Jews there is a great tradition of learning, a great admiration of the learned. They are a people of the world who have not succumbed to external pressures. The more they have suffered persecution the more keenly they have sought after knowledge. Little wonder that German parents seek to limit the admission of Jewish students to schools, for they are downright envious of their achievements.

V.

The "Hamelitz" correspondent writes from Baltimore a bitter diatribe against the Yiddish press. Not enough that the Yiddish journalists had taken over in New York, now in Baltimore there was established a Yiddish newspaper. Dr. Alexander Harkavy recently began to publish "Der Yiddisher Progress." Now while one cannot carp too much about other Yiddish newspapers, certainly one wonders and is critical of Dr. Harkavy. For this is the man who has pretended to be dedicated to his people and his religion, a lover of Zion, but now he has revealed his true colors. The mask is off and his character is fully revealed. He has betrayed the sacred Hebrew language and he has brought to low station the honor of Hebrew writers.

The correspondent gives evidence of the damage done by Dr. Harkavy's Yiddish newspaper venture. In the past week, Mr. Wolf Shorr, publisher of "Hapisgah," a Hebrew newspaper, came to Baltimore to seek subscribers for his publication. What heartbreak it was

to behold the man knocking at the doors of Jewish homes, pleading for subscriptions. With great effort fifty subscribers were gotten in Baltimore, a city which prides itself as a "mother in Israel." On the other hand subscribers to the "Jargon" newspapers run into the hundreds and thousands. When the correspondent took Mr. Shorr to various homes for subscription solicitations they were met by resistance. On the one hand the Orthodox Jew said that the Hebrew newspapers made light of tradition and Torah. Rather he would in his spare time study the Talmud. On the other hand the so-called Enlightened Jew countered with the argument that the Hebrew language had no place in America. The Enlightened Jew was not interested in problems of unity, of nation, of religion; he wanted news.

A special gathering was arranged by the Hebrew enthusiasts of Baltimore in honor of Mr. Shorr. In spite of inspiring messages by leading Baltimore Hebraists, including Dr. Harkavy, the response was cool. Mr. Shorr spoke last and he presented a parable:

"Frederick the Great of Prussia looked out of his palace window one morning and he beheld a young man in dignified dress wandering about with a torch in his hand searching first in one corner of the garden, then in another. The monarch sent one of his servants to ascertain the purpose of the young man's strange doings. When the servant returned he informed Frederick that the young man was a priest who was seeking one man who would appreciate his learning and achievement that he might establish him in some church. For such were the instructions given him by the church authorities. He must seek and find his own supporter.

Whereupon Frederick informed him that he was in need of a priest for his personal chapel. Tomorrow morning he was to appear in the chapel pulpit and if he made a favorable impression with his preaching he would be appointed the court priest. The young theologian was pleased and eager to please. He asked therefore of Frederick what subject His Majesty have him preach on, that he might prepare accordingly. Frederick told the young man to return to his residence and later that day a servant would deliver to him his instructions for preachment. The priest did as bidden and awaited his written instructions. But, alas, they never arrived and the night passed. When the morning came the theologian came to the chapel and mounted the pulpit with considerable trepidation. As he stood in the pulpit a servant handed to him a folded sheet of paper. The priest opened the paper, but he found nothing written thereon. After an ominous pause he proceeded to speak. 'Here there is naught, and there, there was naught. And out of naught did God create something!' And the foundation for his sermon was laid, wherefrom he proceeded to build his full message. He was successful in his maiden venture and was appointed court preacher. I, too, like this young theologian, felt that the time was at hand to gain support that I might serve as the priest on the heights of 'Pisgah.' But many have told me that they are already supporters of the Yiddish press and they need no Hebrew publications. I must therefore take my Torah in hand and seek wherever possible for supporters. Perhaps I too will yet create aught of naught."

Pioneer Members of Shaarey Zedek

M. ABRAMS
ISRAEL ACKERMAN
A. ALBERT

LEIB BALCOVSKY
JOSEPH BARON
REV. ABRAHAM BENJAMIN
SINAI BERE
S. BERG
M. BIALAKOWSKY
PHILIP BROWN

M. CAMINETSKY
N. CATS
ISAAC CHALEF
A. COPPELMAN

SHNEIER DINNER
ISAAC DRUXERMAN
PERETZ DRUXERMAN

K. FEIGESON
KALMAN FINKELSTEIN
MOSES FINKELSTEIN
TEVEL FINKELSTEIN
DAVID FINN
GEORGE FRANKFURTER

H. GELGERAN
W. GOLDBLOOM
H. GOLDSTAUB
CH. GROBMAN

M. HALPERIN
JACOB HEIMAN

JOHN LAVINE
ABRAHAM LECHTZIER
MOSES LECHTZIER
H. LEVI

ABRAHAM MAX
P. MINUCK

J. NAROVLANSKY
LEIB NUDELMAN

DAVID RIPSTEIN
JACOB RIPSTEIN
SIMON RIPSTEIN
CH. RISKY
NISSEL ROSENBLATT
HIRAM ROSENTHAL
JACOB ROSENBERG

J. J. SHRAGGE
E. SCHWARTZ
ISRAEL SCHWARTZ
SIMON SILVERSTEIN
J. SUDMAN

ELIAS TAPPER
ISAAC TIRKELTAUB

J. L. WAXENGISSER
B. WEIDMAN
HIRAM WEIDMAN
J. WENIGROTSKY
Z. WERETNIKOW
LOUIS WERTHEIM
MAX WODLINGER

BEN ZIMMERMAN
NISSEL ZIMMERMAN

*As recorded in the minutes of Shaarey Zedek Congregation.

Pioneer Members of Rosh Pina

ACKERMAN
ADELMAN

BARON
BASSMAN
BERNSTEIN
BLACK
BRONFMAN
BROWNSTEIN

DRUXERMAN

ELITZER
FALINOWSKY
FINKELMAN
FINKELSTEIN
FURMAN

GELLER
GERTEL
GOLDSTEIN
GROBMAN
GULEK
GURFEIN

HARTENBURG

KAMINETSKY
KLUNER
KRAMER

KRIGLOF
KRUTCHEWSKY

LECHTZIER
LERNER
LEVITAN
LISS

MILMET
MINUK
MILSTEIN
MOSKOWITZ

PERLMUTTER

RHINE
ROSEN
ROSENBLATT

SALIT
STEINBERG

TANNENBAUM
TIRKELTAUB

WEINBERG

ZAITCHOV
ZIGISMUND
ZIMMERMAN

*The early minutes of Rosh Pina do not include the first names or initials of its members.

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